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# ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL HISTORY

PHILOSOPHICALLY CONSIDERED,

WITH REFERENCE TO

THE FUTURE RE-UNION OF CHRISTIANS.

THE FIRST THREE BOOKS,  
COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD  
TO THE DEATH OF WYCLIFFE.

BY THE REV.

GEORGE TOWNSEND, D.D.

*Canon of Durham,*

*Author of the Arrangement of the Old and New Testaments,*

*Scriptural Communion with God, &c. &c. &c.*

ISAIAH xlv. 9, 10.

אֲנִכִּי אֵל . . . . מִנִּיד מִרְאשִׁית אַחֲרִית

'Εγώ εἰμι ὁ Θεός—ἀναγγέλλων πρότερον τὰ ἔσχατα πρὶν γενέσθαι. *Sept.*

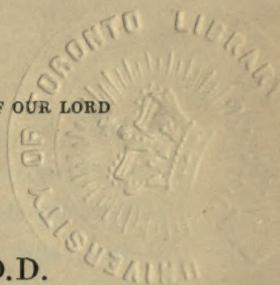
Ego sum Deus—annunciatus ab exordio novissimum. *Vulgate.*

I am God—declaring the end from the beginning.

Dedicated to Lord Lindsay.

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PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL

# HISTORY

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DEDICATION

TO

LORD LINDSAY.

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MY DEAR LORD,

WHEN the latter part of the Second Volume of this work was in the press, I had the very great pleasure of perusing your Lordship's most interesting book, "Progression by Antagonism." I was glad to see that one at least of those, who by rank, talent, research, and severe, though disinterested labour, can influence the public mind; had directed the attention of the literary, as well as of the religious world, to such a subject. The moral of your Book, as you have related it, in one of your valuable letters to me in the course of our correspondence, is the same as that of my own present effort, "*that the continued progression of mankind, must end in their eventual reunion.*" The difference between the mode of expressing your theory and my own, is merely verbal. Your Lordship's is, that, *Progression by the Antagonism* of evil to good, is a general law of the moral government of God; mine may be said to be, that, *Progression by the Exhaustion of Evil*, is a general law of the same moral govern-

ment. Both *theories* (if eternal truths may be degraded by a name so abused) are founded on the proposition which I have selected as the motto for this work, "God declareth the end from the beginning;" and also on the two elucidations of that proposition, which begin and end, respectively, the volume of God's revelation. The first is, "that there shall be enmity," or antagonism, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; the second is, that "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." The first is the prophecy which is the germ of all history; the second declares the future accomplishment, in the fulness of time, of that prophecy. The whole of the intermediate space between the fall of man and the final conquest of the evil which has resulted from that fall, includes the period whose record is given in the Old and New Testament; the period from the closing of the New Testament, through the whole compass of modern history, to the present day; and the period from the present day to the dawn of that predicted era, when the Scriptures and the Catholic Church shall have so leavened and influenced the world; that there shall be more virtue than vice, more knowledge than ignorance, more religion than infidelity, more holiness than indifference, more love than hatred, and more union than disunion among Christians. This state of the world may be said to be the kingdom of Christ; and all this is only the promised result of the contest, or the perpetual antagonism, between good and evil. I would describe this contest by the expression, "progression by exhaustion," because I have observed in the history of

the world, that the antagonistical masses of evil which oppose good, are all, after a certain course of antagonism, or enmity, gradually rendered uninfluential; that is, they become exhausted. The truth of the unchangeable God, for instance, has been developed in the three stages of Patriarchism, Judaism, and Christianity. The first form of this religion was corrupted into heathenism. Idolatry offered its bloody sacrifices, consecrated the vices of the heart to the service of the false god it placed upon the throne of the true God; and gradually destroyed the very remembrance of the God of Adam. The antagonism continued for centuries. The time came when the influence of this evil ceased. Its power is destroyed. No human being now offers his children to Moloch, or commands the worship of Mars or Venus. *Heathenism is exhausted.* The second form of the unchangeable religion, Judaism, was opposed by similar antagonisms; by the fire-worshippers of Persia, by the elegant mythology of Greece, by the Roman worshipper of Jupiter and of the gods of the capitol. All this antagonism, as a general influence on civilized man, has ended. It has accomplished its purpose. *It is exhausted.* The third form of the unchangeable truth has suffered, or does suffer, the antagonism of external violence from four several powers; each of which runs its course, each of which will be found (when our posterity survey the history of the world between Christ, and the better days before us; as we survey the rise and fall of the past four monarchies which preceded the birth of Christ) to be overruled for good; and each of which, as antagonistical to the kingdom of Christ, *have been, are, or will be*

*exhausted.* My object in the present work will be to point out the errors, and the persecutions of these four several antagonisms to the establishment of the Church and kingdom of Christ. I wish to show how the influence of the civil power of pagan Rome was exhausted by the time of Justinian; how the palmy influence of the corruptions of the Churches, of which the Church of Rome was the chief, received the blow which will finally exhaust their influence, by the labours of Wycliffe (with which the present part of my labour ends for a time); how the influence of the pseudo-scriptural or puritan power, which had its Wycliffian origin, its gradual corruption, and its final triumph, lost its influence by its very success; and became politically ruined as a dominant antagonism, after the civil wars of England; and how the period of modern infidelity began, and progressed, and will be exhausted in its turn as the last great enmity of the predicted kingdom of Christ. All these antagonisms, all the evils resulting from these four masses of mingled good and evil, must and will be exhausted under that *moral law of Progression by Antagonism*, which has ever been the one chief predicted characteristic of the government of God; and when these four masses of antagonistical evil shall have done their office, then shall be the beginning of the predicted end. The first prophecy of Revelation shall be fulfilled in the accomplishment of the last prophecy of Revelation; and the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ. If I were requested to describe in one well-selected word, the final results of the antagonism between good and evil, it would be that which your Lordship has chosen—Progression. *The great object for*

*which Revelation has been given, and for which Christ's Holy Catholic Church has been instituted and planted in the world, cannot be accomplished by our retrogradation.* We must be continually progressing to the greatest good: and this cannot be done by adding falsehoods to truths, calling the mingled mass development, and making the whole medley an apology for retrogradation to Popery. We must be alike emancipated from pagan heathenism; from the great corruption of Christianity called Popery; from mere Sectarianism; from loathsome Infidelity; that is, from all the four antagonisms into which the past and present history of civilized man, since the ascension of Christ, may be divided. The manner in which this may probably be done, I shall make the subject of the sixth and last book of this work. I trust that I shall there be able to show, that *after Christ's Holy Catholic Church has undergone these, its four great antagonisms*; and after the fourfold masses of their evil are exhausted; there will remain under the governance of God's Providence, and under the unresisted influence of God's good Spirit—the union of civil power, without tyranny; of ecclesiastical power, without the despotism of an usurped supremacy, or the claims of an impossible infallibility; of the domination of Scripture without the unscriptural assumption, and stern insolence of Puritanism; and of the unlimited permission of freedom of inquiry, without the rashness, blasphemy, and presumption of infidelity. I hope to establish this one *holy, solemn, and sacred truth*; **THAT GOD'S WORK MUST BE DONE BY GOD'S CHURCH**; that in this manner, and by this means only; all, which God

declares from the beginning will be effected ; and Christ's kingdom, which is Christ's Church, will be co-extensive with the civilized world. Neither political tyranny, nor popery, nor sectarianism, nor infidelity, can bless mankind. *These must be all exhausted*, as the antagonistical evils which now prevent the Conqueror of evil, sin, and death, from taking the "government of the world upon His shoulders." But God's Scriptures, and God's Church, will accomplish in God's time, under God's Holy Spirit, all God's prophecies. These, by events now unknown and unrevealed, which His providence will bring to pass, shall effect the progression, and develope the results ; which His own Revelation has alike predicted, both at its beginning and at its end.

We do not yet see how God will do this, and therefore I hear many, very many, with whom I have conversed on these subjects, unhesitatingly declare, that such results of the antagonism between good and evil, are impossible, utterly impossible. What is this, but to limit God's power by our weakness ; God's omniscience by our ignorance ? The lives of men and the ages of nations, are measured by days of years. The prophecies of God are measured by the days of thousands of years. With Him a thousand years are as one day. Man, in this sense of the word "day," has not yet been one week upon the earth. The history of the human race is but beginning. Three days have not even yet elapsed since Christ returned to the invisible world, to receive for Himself the kingdom of His Church. I trust that I shall be able to show, (though *I dare not derive any arguments from the details* of unfulfilled prophecy), that we may justly say we see the dawning of the great day

of the Lord. I believe that I see the morning star of His glory arising; and that the results of the history of the past antagonism of evil, are even now becoming obvious, in the diminished influence, and therefore in the incipient exhaustion, of much of that evil. I believe, too, and hope, and trust with your Lordship, that England may be one of the chief instruments, by which God will accomplish much of man's progression. By the union of its free government, with the farther reformation of its Church; by its love of Scripture, and by its magnificent permission of the spirit of inquiry which seeks for truth, England, we may trust, will become the Christian leaven of the world; and the chief builder and restorer of the true Catholic Church of Christ. All civilized mankind may be said to be now struggling for a better state, than the last two thousand years have afforded; and we may believe, that they *will all eventually attain to* more freedom in their civil governments, more right estimation of their reformed ecclesiastical governments, more general love of Scripture, and more enlightenment of reason, than hitherto; that is, that the world may become more Christian, and that Christians will attain to more union, on the basis of their common religion.

If it please God to spare my life, *I hope to point out the mode in which the final union in one Holy Catholic Church, of the various sects, parties, and Churches, who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, may take place.* What Wycliffe taught the thoughtful to desire; what Luther taught the thoughtful to resolve to possess; I would teach the thoughtful to plan and to effect. I wish to your Lordship that

unalloyed felicity which I have uniformly found, in the study of God's providence and glory. In some things I fear I shall offend all. This risk, however, must be run. As the Jew and the Gentile were alike scandalized by St. Paul, when he explained to them the necessity of their union in One Church: so shall I alike displease the Papist, the Sectarian, and probably even the Churchman, by the declaration, that they have all many antagonisms to resign, and many sacrifices to make, at the altar of their common Saviour, and Redeemer. If we speak the truth even in the most affectionate love; we must expect, in an age of controversy, exasperation, and misapprehension, that the truth will be deemed falsehood, and our love, hatred.

Farewell, my dear Lord. These studies are the studies of eternity, the anticipations of immortality, the true breathing of the gales of the paradise of God, before our bark, as it slowly sails to heaven, anchors on its happy shore. There shall God's providence be known. There shall be no Papist nor Protestant, but all Christians. There shall be no ignorance; as there will be no sorrow, nor sin, nor death.

I have the honour to be,

My dear Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful friend and servant,

GEO. TOWNSEND.

*May 14th, 1847.*

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ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL  
HISTORY

PHILOSOPHICALLY CONSIDERED,

WITH REFERENCE TO

THE FUTURE RE-UNION OF CHRISTIANS.



# ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL HISTORY,

&c. &c.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE view which I have ventured to take in this work of the past history, the present state, and the probable future condition of the Church of God, is very different from that which has been taken by any other writer on the subject. I wish, therefore, to direct the attention of the reader to the *origin*, the *plan*, the *object*, and the *spirit* of my labour.

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1. The *origin* of the work was the unavoidable surprise which I believe is felt by the greater majority of persons; when they first read the narratives of cruel executions and patient martyrdoms, which have been inflicted and endured in all ages; as the result of the differences of opinion on religious doctrine and religious worship; and which are related in the pages of John Foxe, and of the fathers, and historians of the Church of Christ. Why, I could not but exclaim, why has all this evil been permitted? Is there not a God who governs the world<sup>1</sup>? Is the course of human events “a mighty maze, and all without a plan?” What is the testimony of reason on the permission of evil, without referring to revelation? It is silent; or, if it break that silence, it is to confess its

<sup>1</sup> The subscribers to the London edition of Foxe's Martyrology, 1841, who may have read the Introductory Letter to the Life and Defence of Foxe, prefixed to the first volume of that edition, will be already acquainted with the train of thought which I am here relating. I must be considered as addressing both them and those of the public generally who may be interested in these inquiries.

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ignorance. What is the testimony of revelation, that is, of revelation as it is recorded in the Old and New Testament; and as it is understood in the only intelligible and philosophical manner, literally and simply, by the mechanic and the peasant, as well as by the scholar and the theologian; without the imaginings of the interpreters, who would teach us that modern experience alone is the criterion of the truth, both of the evidences, or of the discoveries, of that revelation? What is the declaration of the one religion, of which Christianity is but the completion, as manhood may be called the completion of youth? It affirms, that there is no mighty maze whatever; but that there is only one plan of Providence, permitting evil, and eventually overruling all evil to the production of a greater good than if that evil had not previously existed; and therefore, that as certainly as the rise and fall, the progress and decay, of the four great monarchies of antiquity, can be now proved to have been no mighty maze; but one plan of preparation for the establishment of the truth which shall eventually civilize all mankind, and become the only religion of the civilized world; so it will be found by those who at some future day can look back upon the events of modern history, as we look back upon the events of ancient history; that all the rise and fall of states, all the changes of dynasties, all the permission of civil or ecclesiastical, popular or philosophical, persecution, shall be overruled to a greater degree of good, than if that persecution had not existed; until the same tree of life which was planted in the paradise of this world at the beginning of the history of the human race, shall be again planted in this world at the conclusion of its history<sup>2</sup>; that is, until the whole family of man become one united though imperfect family of God, not free from evil hearts and evil thoughts, but free from the religious persecutions which have so often been the results of religious hatred. I believe on the testimony of revelation, that the day must come when the whole human race shall be one fold under one Shepherd. I believe, too, that the comparison of our Blessed Saviour describes more accurately than any other, the manner in which this mighty change will be finally accomplished; that as the leaven leavens slowly,

<sup>2</sup> Acts and Monuments of John Foxe. Preface, p. 5.

gradually and imperceptibly, but surely and effectually, the whole mass; so also the religion and the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall silently make its way from nation to nation, till all nations should welcome its glory; and so also shall every nation, under the slow but ever improving influence of the common Christianity, eventually attain to such morality, that there should be more virtue than vice, more religion than irreligion, among them; and to such love and union also among themselves, that there should be few bitter hatreds, and no fierce persecutions. And because this state of improvement and happiness could not be the work of one age, or of many ages, I was compelled to believe in the progressive leavening, or in the progressive improvement, of the human race, under the influence of Christianity; which should terminate in the universal or general melioration which the prophets of God have predicted; and which may be reasonably anticipated as the result of commerce, knowledge, civilization, and Christianity.

This delightful hope, however, that the time should come when persecutions should cease, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ, unavoidably led me to inquire into the causes for which those kingdoms, or societies, which had already received the Gospel, had persecuted each other; and what would be the state of that Church, society, people, or nation, which should maintain at once truth, peace, and union. And the answer to this question presented itself from the contemplation of those four influences which are the bonds of all Christian societies; which, when united, constitute the happiness; which, when disunited, constitute the misery, of states and Churches; which—are more perfectly blended in the free government of the Church and State of England, than in any other of the kingdoms of the world; and which render the government therefore of this country the chief, though not yet perfect model upon which all other states and countries must finally hope to establish truth and union among themselves; and peace and union with each other. Four united influences or principles, are essential to the happiness and harmony of every people. They are—the *civil power*, or the authority which frames laws to regulate the nation, without reference to the question of religion; the *ecclesiastical power*, or the authority which

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frames laws respecting religion without reference to the decisions of the civil power; *revelation*, or the authority of the divine law, which is equally binding on the civil power and its subjects, so that they embrace the abstract truth; and which is equally binding on the ecclesiastical power, so that it teach no doctrines which clash with that revelation, and ordain no regulations which shall clash with the Christian civil power;—and fourthly, *reason*, or conscience, the authority which every human being, who can think, compare, and judge, feels and knows to exist within him; and which renders him responsible to his Almighty Judge for the manner in which he obeys or disobeys the authority of the *civil power*, the authority of the *ecclesiastical power*, or the authority of the *revelation*, which is given to direct both the law makers and the law obeyers, the rulers and the subjects; who are bound together for mutual happiness into nations, states, and churches. Where these four are united, so that the conscience approves of laws which, being consistent with the designs of revelation, are upheld by the ecclesiastical power for their truth, by the civil power for their usefulness, and by both for their promoting peace; then, and then only, a nation is united and happy. Where these are separated, so that the conscience is compelled by its reasonable interpretation of revelation, to desire the alteration of the laws which are made by the ecclesiastical authority, because of their falsehood or folly; and to withhold obedience from the laws which are made by the civil power, because of their inconsistency or opposition to revelation; then the nation is disunited and miserable. And as it is with a nation, so it may be, and so it has been, with the whole mass of nations which have hitherto formed the universal Church of Christ. Instead of being united by the union of these four influences, they have been separated, externally and internally, by their disunion. At one period the *civil power* clashed with the ecclesiastical, and compelled the resistance of the believer in revelation, and the exerciser of his reason. At another period the *ecclesiastical power* subdued the civil powers of the world, and compelled the resistance of the believer in the abstract revelation, by imposing new doctrines, and by enforcing their reception by intolerable cruelties. At a *third period* the successful opponents of these doctrines and cruelties,

proceeded to the same excess, as the influences they rejected, and persecuted in the name of religion. While at a *fourth period*, the admirers and the advocates of human reason, rejecting alike the civil power, the ecclesiastical power, and the authority of revelation; perverted their privileges to the assumption of an equal right to ordain the reception of falsehood, and to punish the rejectors of its tyranny. And it is a most remarkable fact, that the long period between the Ascension of Christ and the day in which we live, may be divided into four several great periods, in each of which one of these four influences prevailed over the minds of men to the detriment of the rest.—The *civil power* or influence prevailed from the Ascension to the decree of Justinian, A.D. 533. The will of the prince, whether just or unjust, was the law of the world; and this period was marked by the persecution of the primitive Christians, and by the arbitrary enactments of the Christian emperors, against all, whom the civil ruler denominated heretics. The *ecclesiastical power* prevailed over the civilized world for much good and much evil, from A.D. 533 to the close of the Council of Trent, in 1563. It is disgraced by intolerance and falsehood, by persecution and injustice, and by the final establishment of that creed and its sanctions, which we call Popery. The *influence of the advocates and admirers of revelation alone*, and of the determined resolution to be guided by the abstract truth of the Holy Scriptures, extended from the closing of the Council of Trent till the reign of the second Charles; when the triumph of English Deism laid the foundation of French philosophy. This influence also ended in much error in an opposite extreme, and in much intolerance and persecution. While the *fourth influence*, that of human reason alone, beginning with the English Deism and ending with the French Revolution, professing to be offended alike with the *civil*, the *ecclesiastical*, and the *Scriptural* power, demonstrated to the world the folly of aiming at any perfection, which separated the authority of revelation from the government of the state and nation.

Such are the four influences, I thought, which when united render nations happy, when separated render nations miserable. And the conviction was forced upon me by the contemplation of the fearful persecutions of which each had been guilty, (though the persecutions by Popery had been

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more deliberate, fierce, cruel, and continued, than the others,) that as the Deity governed the world on the plan of overruling evil for good; therefore it was, that before the time arrived, when the kingdoms of the world should be united as one fold under one shepherd; a large mass of experience must teach the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, the churches and states, the subjects and the people of the world; that there can be neither truth, peace, nor union, when the civil law, the ecclesiastical law, the sanctions of revelation, and the conclusions of conscience and reason, are separated and not united. Strange, difficult, romantic, and absurd, as many will declare the attempt to be, I resolved to go through this whole maze of Providence, to endeavour to discover the causes of persecution, under each of the four influences, as each became dominant among mankind; and to point out the lessons of experience afforded by each; by which some plan of an universal union among Christians, on the basis of truth, and hatred of persecution, might be framed; under the blended sanction of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the world, governed by God's revelation; and guided, not by arbitrary rules, not by primitive practices, not by useless regulations, either in churches or states; but like the early Christians of the New Testament; by Scriptural discipline, impartial reason, and an enlightened conscience.

2. From the statement of the origin, we proceed to the *plan* of the work.

It is divided into six books. In the first book I consider the *subject generally*, and review the nature and extent of the four influences to which I have alluded.

In the second book I relate *the history and perversions by persecution of the influence of the civil power*. I consider this period as extending from the Ascension, to the grant of authority, by Justinian, to the Bishop of Rome. The sceptre over the civilized world was wielded through the whole of this time by imperial hands; that is, by the civil power alone. Christianity, though generally under persecution till the time of Constantine, was a system sometimes tolerated and sometimes severely oppressed; but it was never regarded as the ally of the civil authority till the edict of the dying Galerius in the year 311, when all external persecution of Christianity, as a religion condemned by the state, was terminated.

The edict of Milan, A.D. 313, in which a general toleration was declared, had, it is true, been preceded by the edict of Gallienus, A.D. 259, in which the Christian Church had been recognized as a legal corporation, permitted to possess lands. This edict, however, did not end the general persecutions. The edict of Galerius was followed by those of Constantine, in which the religion of the emperor was found to be no longer Pagan. Constantine maintained his power with firmness. The empire, between the death of Constantine and Justinian, was maddened by the ferocious quarrels of the Christians, whom Constantine had desired to protect in peace. The emperors became the partizans of the opposed, and contending religionists. They sometimes endeavoured to quell the storms of the mutual hatred of the Christians by severe and useless punishment; and the picture of contending ecclesiastics, divided churches, and sanguinary decrees, occasioned by the perpetual interference of the civil rulers; who alternately, according to their changing decisions, condemned the leaders, both of the Episcopal Trinitarian Christians and their sectarian opponents, to exile, imprisonment, or death; together with the popular outrages and the ebullitions of pagans against Christians, and of Christians against pagans; afford us some of the most painful delineations of human nature which the impartial hand of history has drawn for the benefit of posterity. *The error was with the civil power.* The departing from the tenor of the edict of Milan, and the vain and useless though well-intended endeavours of Constantine to terminate the controversies of his Christian subjects, by patient hearing and impartial decision between them, as in the case of the Donatists; and then by inflicting penalties on those who refused to sacrifice their opinions to the imperial arbitrator, as in the case of Arius; originated and continued the evils which soon began to weaken the empire; till it became the more easy prey to its invaders. The emperors considered their will to be the criterion of truth. They required their subjects to alter their opinions and decisions at the caprice, the orthodoxy or heterodoxy, of a successful soldier, an ignorant peasant, a factious civilian, or an imperial prince; as these opposite personages, by force or bribery, by descent or treachery, might have attained the empire. The differences of opinion which, in an age of

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limited power to the prince, or of unfettered discussion among the people, or of legislative representation of the popular will; would have extended and displayed themselves in bulky volumes, or harmless though impassioned declamations; assumed the more vexatious form of imperial enactments, savage outrages, and civil war. Yet it was at this time that the prediction began to be more expressly fulfilled:—"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

The morality, the spiritual sanctions, the evidences and the truth of Christianity, commended themselves, in spite of all opposition, as they will ever do, to the approbation of the thoughtful and the civilized; and compelled alike the homage of the truly philosophical, and of the humbly conscientious. The new religion blended itself with the state, summoned councils and enacted laws, which were carried into effect by the civil functionaries; though they were originally decreed by the churches when deprived of the protection of the throne. But the civil power alone was the supreme authority, whether for protection or oppression, for good or evil. All the laws which were passed in the next period respecting the suppression of such religious opinions as were deemed to be offensive to the supreme power of the ecclesiastical ruler of the day, were founded upon the civil laws of Theodosius and Justinian; and these were the results only of the earlier laws of Constantine against the real or supposed heretics of his reign. The experiment of Constantine to intimidate, became the precedent with his successors to punish. And the civil power, by its outward compliance with the mistaken zeal of the Church itself against the heresies of the day, established that very authority of the Church under which, in the subsequent period, it was at first resisted, then controlled, and finally vanquished and subdued.

The predominance of the civil power, and its unrestrained, though often questionable, authority over the adherents to Christianity, terminated about the year 533. The grant of power by Justinian to the Bishop of Rome began the transition state, when the civil and ecclesiastical authorities commenced that struggle for pre-eminence, which ended in the transmitting the sceptre over the civilized world to the hands of the Bishop of Rome.

In the third book I treat on the *history and the perversions*

*by persecution of the influence of the ecclesiastical power.*

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Very beautiful is the spectacle, to the believer in Christianity, of the gradual fulfilment of the prophecy which declared, that the stone should become a mountain, and fill the whole earth; but no less mournful is the contemplation of the evils that have hitherto attended its progress. The Christian Church, in the former period, during its submission to the civil power, had overcome all the strength of its persecutors. It conquered Judaism at Jerusalem, heathenism at Antioch, the pride of human reasoning at Alexandria, and the supremacy of the imperial despotism at Constantinople and at Rome. The time had now arrived when the mass of Christian Churches gradually became formed into one visible communion, subjected to one code of laws, and ruled by one ecclesiastical superior. This is the period in which Christian persecuted Christian, by laws which are still unrepealed by the authority which originally enacted them; which are so far obsolete, that where the power of senates emanates from the people, they are not permitted to be carried into effect; but which are still binding on the consciences of many ecclesiastics, if that preventive power of executing them should cease to be influential. They are not repealed, and they will deserve, therefore, our more especial attention.

This period extends from the reign of Justinian to the publication of the bull of Pope Pius, in the reign of Elizabeth, when the Roman pontiff, misinterpreting the commands, or rather, the desires (for it had been decreed that a council could not command a pope) of the Council of Trent, gave to the world the creed which now constitutes the profession of faith of the Church of Rome. The bull in which this creed is embodied, was published in the year 1564.

In the fourth book I shall treat *on the history and the perversion by persecution, under the Puritans, of the influence of that principle of the Reformation which taught men to appeal to the Scriptures alone as their sole guide in all matters of religious belief, and ecclesiastical discipline.* The essential differences between the persecutions or punishments for religious opinion, in the period of the ecclesiastical power, between the age of Justinian and the Council of Trent, and those of the period which we shall consider in the fourth book, consist in these two points:—In the one, persecution was

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embodied in the public law; and it not only was never abolished, but it increased in severity to the very moment of its renunciation by the greater part of civilized mankind. In the latter, though it long continued to be a part of the general law among all the nations of Europe, it has gradually ceased not only in practice, but as a principle of legislation; and it is now, we may trust, irrevocably resigned. It could not, indeed, have been expected that the universal belief, which had been induced by the universal practice and legal establishment of persecution, or punishment for holding abstract opinions, and which is so congenial also to the human mind; could be at once entirely done away. In England, France, Holland, and elsewhere, the supposed crime of heresy was consequently to be still-extinguished by severity, though the definition of the crime was altered. Anabaptists were burnt by Elizabeth in England. Servetus suffered at Geneva. Sect persecuted sect. The synod of Dort, the Presbyterians in Scotland, the Independents in America, the Puritans as well as the Episcopalians in England, the Huguenots in France, and the Anabaptists in Munster, were all guilty of many acts which cannot but be pronounced cruel and unjustifiable, according to our present wiser and more tolerant opinions; yet the great difference between these persecutions and those of the Church of Rome, may be found in the total discontinuance of the laws and the principles which sanction them; while those of the Church of Rome have not yet been rescinded.

In the fifth book I shall treat of *the history and of the perversion by persecution of the influence of human reason*. This period may be said to commence in the century prior to its chief trophy, the great outbreaking of crime and folly, the earthquake of the French Revolution. The French Revolution may be called the principal event in the great contest which is still going on between the stationary and the moving powers of the human mind; between the definite and the indefinite; between the restless, impatient, and ardent aspirations of man after a greater degree of civil and religious freedom; and between the temporal absolute power and the spiritual absolute power<sup>3</sup>, which were identified as one

<sup>3</sup> See Guizot, p. 430.

oppression by an enraged, ill-instructed, and imperfectly civilized population. The doctrines and discipline of the Gallican Church, though differing in some important respects from that of the Italian Church, retained the peculiar subjects which are most opposed to revelation, and most offensive to human reason. The Protestantism which had counteracted much of its evils, had been almost eradicated by the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. The consequence was, that Romanism and Christianity were regarded as one religion. The infidels of the school of Voltaire and of the Encyclopædia, the philosophers, and the active intellectual speculators in France, did not, therefore, follow the example of the Reformers in England and on the continent, at the time of the teaching of Luther. They did not assail some one or more errors, while they still spoke of revelation, and of Christianity in general, with seriousness and veneration. They turned the whole subject of revealed religion into ridicule. They denied, at once, *transubstantiation*—the perversion, and the *atonement*—the truth perverted! They denied the existence of the Atoner, and the very possibility of revelation, as implying the possibility of miracle. The revocation of the edict of Nantz<sup>4</sup> was the remote cause of the French Revolution.

Religious controversies may terminate in open wars, but they do not, among the Protestants at least, end in sanguinary massacre. If the two parties had been permitted to co-exist in France, the population of Paris, Marseilles, and other towns in general, would have learned that Christianity is not necessarily identified with Popery; and that an error might be removed from a Church without aiming at the overthrow of Christianity. It was not so to be. The Providence of God permitted the infidel principle to display to the world the fearful consequences of the rejection of revelation by human reason, because of any real or imagined grievance, whether civil or spiritual.

<sup>4</sup> The manner in which Massillon praised Louis XIV. for this measure is well known. He eulogizes the king for preferring the (supposed) interests of religion to the advantage derived by France from the labour of active, talented heretics. Bossuet acted the same part, and wrote books for the converts by the Dragonades. Even

Du Pin could depart from his better principles, and speak of the king—*“innumeri pene extorres, qui Dei Optimi Maximi beneficio, secundis Regis Christianissimi curis, in Galliâ ad Ecclesiam accesserunt,”* &c. *Monitum ad Lectorem*, prefixed to his treatise *De Antiquâ Ecclesiæ Disciplinâ*, &c.

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*In the sixth and last book of the work, the most important of all, I purpose, therefore, to sum up the whole argument.* I shall endeavour to show, after I have related the history of the various attempts which have hitherto been fruitlessly made to effect an union among Christians, that man can only attain to his highest earthly happiness by blending into one universal polity the results of the experience of the past, as that experience has been gradually afforded by the civil power, the ecclesiastical power, the pseudo-Scriptural, and the pseudo-human-reason power; and that as the four monarchies of the ancient world prepared the way for the coming of Christ to instruct and to suffer, so the result of the successive predominance of these four influences will be, the preparation of the world for the greatest amount of peace and happiness of man, as an improving and progressing race. Such peace and happiness can only take place under the reign of Christian principles, Christian truth, and Christian union. My object will be to point out the useful inferences which may be afforded to the universal Church of Christ, from the experience of the long records of the past; to show in what manner the civil power, the ecclesiastical power, Scripture, and reason, may be combined, in one solid foundation of international, ecclesiastical, Scriptural, philosophical law; so that the whole Christian and civilized world may become one Church of Christ, one family, aiming at the conversion of their brethren, till the whole world partake of that tree of life, whose very leaves flourish for the healing of nations. I believe that such a plan of union may be developed, and that evil has been permitted so long to exist, that the eventual establishment of general union among mankind may be more perfect. I believe that the experience which shall be generally understood and perceived from the separation of the four influences which have ruled the intellectual world, shall become the foundation of the general desire of uniting them all in one comprehensive scheme, worthy of the splendid promises which the God of Christianity has granted to His universal Church. I believe that *the civil power by its congresses,—the ecclesiastical power, by its renewed councils,—the adherents of Scripture, by the better perception of the inferences deducible from its sacred pages,—and the lovers of philosophy and of reason, by the true*

liberality which Scripture, combined with reason, will ever afford to mankind,—will all contribute to the building of the temple of God. All in their turns have persecuted, all have had their watchwords to inflame the partizans of partial truth, to the infliction of needless misery. All are invaluable in themselves; but all are only productive of peace, union, and entire truth, when they are combined together, as the four evangelists of the Gospel itself, to declare one system of good, and to speak one tale of peace.

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3. The *object* of the work, therefore, is to propose some plans of union to the universal Church of Christ, by which the churches and states of the world may not be un-Catholized, as Mirabeau proposed, but by which they may be first un-Poperized, and un-Trented, and un-Lateranized; and thus when the necessity of the word Protestant has ceased, be un-Protestantized, and be wholly Christianized. Having been unwilling to interrupt other efforts by this work, I have submitted, and shall continue to submit, to the Church, various details of the modes by which this object may be effected. They form the dedications to several numbers of my humble labours on the Holy Bible. In the dedication to the Bishop of Rome, prefixed to the third number, I point out to the Bishop of Rome the manner in which, acting upon the principles of his own Church, he may commence the re-union of Christians, by rescinding the twelve Articles of the Council of Trent. In the dedication to the fourth number, I submit to the powers of Europe the principles on which Constantine acted when he endeavoured to promote the peace of the Christian Church, and the extent to which his example may be followed. In the dedication to the fifth part, I hope to lay before the Queen of England a representation of the manner in which the Protestant sovereign of this empire may begin to endeavour to restore union to Christians. And in the dedication to the sixth, I appeal to the universal episcopate, that they aim at the accomplishment of one of the chief objects for which the great Head of the Church has made them overseers of his flock. In the course of these dedications, some of the contents of the chief parts of the sixth book of this work will be anticipated, but the whole detail of my plans of union among Christians will be only more fully developed and condensed in that book. My

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only object is to form a plan of union which may be deemed worthy the attention of the whole Catholic Church of Christ. I wish to prove to Rome, to Geneva, to the churches and societies of which the whole mass which name the Name of Christ is formed, that there is no necessity for the continuance of their mutual hatreds; that there are Scriptural, primitive, reasonable foundations for their general union; that their schisms may be healed, and their heresies removed, and that God's Holy Spirit of truth and holiness, is God's Holy Spirit of union and comfort, of peace and love.

4. The *spirit* in which I write is that in which I wish to die, the spirit of love and charity towards all men. I weep over the divisions and hatreds which separate us. I remember the dying words of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. I pray that the Church may be one. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, is our daily prayer. I write in the spirit of that prayer; and believing that the blood of the atonement cannot have been shed in vain, and that the prayer of Christ cannot have been offered in vain, I am convinced that the day shall come when both rulers and people will passionately desire the union and peace among themselves, which shall form the happiness of their churches and nations. May it so be! May my own humble efforts not entirely perish!  
*"Lord, as in heaven, on earth Thy will be done."*

# BOOK THE FIRST.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE AND LIMITS OF THE INFLUENCE OF REVELATION, REASON, THE ECCLESIASTICAL POWER, AND THE CIVIL POWER, UPON THE HUMAN MIND.

### SECTION I.

*Of the Nature and Limits of the Influence of Revelation.*

THOUGH the four influences of Revelation, Reason, the Ecclesiastical Power, and the Civil Power, which ought BOOK I.  
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of the influences of the civil or ecclesiastical power—of revelation—or of reason, we shall do well to consider the nature and the limits of the authority of each. We shall thus be enabled to see more clearly in what manner the study and experience of the past will instruct us to promote union among Christians. I have alluded in the Introduction to the persecutions which were occasioned by the perversion of each of them, in their chronological order. It will, however, be best to consider them according to their importance and value. Each of them must be regarded as possessing, or entitled to, an independent sway of itself over the mind. If they clash with each other, or if the individual who is anxious to decide rightly, imagines that their several claims to his obedience are opposed to each other; he will, I think, arrange their demands upon his homage in the following order of precedency. As a believer in revelation, he will place first in importance, the laws which he is convinced proceed from God alone, because that happiness is most to be valued which is most permanent; and if the soul be immortal, the laws of God must refer to immortality, and they will be as much more deserving of his homage than any temporal law, as that immortality is more important than mortality. The noblest minds govern society, though they do not always rule over it. One criterion of nobility of mind is, that it be impressed with the anticipation of a better world; and that it regard its present state of being as the introduction only to its real, because its permanent destiny. The discoveries, laws, sanctions, and requirements of revelation will consequently precede all the demands of reason, churches, or civil governments. But revelation, by its evidences, appeals to his reason. Reason will consequently take the second place in the government of mind. Ecclesiastical power is but the regulation of the inferences deducible from revelation and reason, as to the best mode of attaining the objects proposed by both. The civil power refers to the government of man by sanctions which are of inferior importance; that is, to those which appeal only to temporal motives, and will consequently take the lowest place with him whose principles of action are derived from the loftier sources. Obedience is paid to civil government by the Christian as a part of his higher duty: it is bestowed more unreservedly, therefore, in all cases where the claims of Cæsar do not inter-

fere with the claims of God. In every well-regulated society this collision is generally avoidable. More implicit submission is consequently paid by the Christian to the temporal authority (though he professes to estimate his allegiance to the Giver of Revelation above that which is due to his earthly sovereign) than is generally yielded by those who are not directed by his high motives; and who are, therefore, more liable to be misled by the arts of faction, or by the caprices of imaginary or real grievances, at the very moment when they profess their homage to their earthly rulers; unimpeded by the claims of revelation, or the demands of their ecclesiastical rivals. It will easily be perceived, that these very general remarks contain the germ of nearly all the great controversies which have been agitated in states and churches respecting the requisitions of the four great influences which contend for supremacy over the mind; and it becomes, therefore, necessary, before we consider either the general history of the perversion of their influences in the several persecutions which have harassed the world; or the plans of union which may be suggested as the result of the cessation of those persecutions; to contemplate more fully, and more accurately, the extent of the authority of each. Peace and union are the effect of the combination of their agencies. Misery and discord are the uniform result of their separation.

We must begin with the survey of the extent of the influence of revelation. To understand fully what ought to be the extent of the influence of revelation on the mind and conduct, we must consider the knowledge which we are able to obtain from experience and reflection on the nature of man. The discoveries of geology, the late origin of the arts and sciences, and the general tradition of all nations, (excepting a few oriental exaggerators of unauthorised dates, which seek to refer to a very remote origin, the present state of things,) —concur to prove to us, that not many thousand years have elapsed since men and animals were placed on the earth by a beneficent Creator. Natural theology has employed all its stores of argument to prove to us the great care which the Supreme Being, who made the inferior animals, has bestowed upon them; so that each, whether bird, beast, fish, or insect, should be enabled to secure to itself the highest happiness in that place in the creation, to which it is capable of attaining.

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Each is endowed with so much mental skill, that it provides its peculiar food, enjoys its short life to the utmost, and takes care for the continuation of its species. The mental skill of animals seems, in many instances, to be the same power, though in a limited degree, which man possesses of drawing conclusions from premises; but because the animal arrives, generally speaking, at the same uniform conclusions, we denominate their mental skill by the name of instinct; by which we mean, that the results of its apparent power, deliberation, or choice, are not only uniform, but unavoidable. The consequence is, that the animals, in all their stages of existence, never improve, either as individuals or races. Each individual bird, beast, fish, or insect, is precisely the same now in its knowledge, biases, and instincts, as it has ever been. Not only so, the race remains the same. The whole tribe or race of lions, or any other animal, for instance, remains the same. One generation is precisely the same as another: it never alters; it never progresses; it never improves. Such as the whole race was at their creation, such they have been, and such they will continue to be: and the God who created them has provided for their felicity according to their wants, and their means of enjoyment.

The argument which natural theology affords us respecting the inferior animals, we apply to man. He also was placed at a late period upon the earth. The Creator, who commanded him to exist there, would certainly extend to him the same kind of protection which he has afforded to the animals. According to his nature, wants, station, means, and demands of enjoyment, provision would be made for his felicity also. What, then, is man? He is *mortal* as an individual; he is *immortal* as an individual<sup>1</sup>. He is progressive from generation to generation as a race. We may expect, therefore, that the Creator would make provision for the happiness of man in each of these respects. As soon as He had created him, and placed him upon the earth, He would provide for his happiness as a

<sup>1</sup> I must be contented with here affirming that man is immortal; for I cannot pause to prove from natural religion, the probable immortality of the soul.—J. H. Browne and other writers fully prove that man might be presumed to have a thinking principle independent of, and distinct from, the

body, and probably immortal, by arguments derived from natural religion; that is, from arguments which are not immediately derived from revelation. I therefore here assume that man is immortal, though it is certain that immortality is only made plain, or brought to light, by the Gospel.

mortal being, as an immortal being, and as a progressing and improving race. Deism is belief in a God. Some Deists believe in the providence of God—that He preserves by His care the world He created by His power. Of these Deists some seem to imagine that the care of Providence has extended to animals but not to man; and that God has done less for man than for animals, by leaving him to himself; while other Deists believe that, in proportion to the greatness of man, would be the care of the Deity concerning him. These believe, therefore, that as man is not provided with instinct, nor with that uniform, unavoidable, mental bias, by which, like the animals of the field, he could secure always his best happiness; it is but just and philosophical to conclude, that the Creator would grant to man, as soon as he had made him, some substitute for that peculiar mental skill with which the animals are endued—that is, that God would grant to man the knowledge essential to his happiness in the three relations of mortality, immortality, and capability of perpetual improvement. *As a mortal being*, man required the knowledge of the choice of food. This is not given by instinct; and we must believe, therefore, was not so given at the first<sup>2</sup>. This knowledge, therefore, would be the commencement of revelation. *As an immortal being*, he would require hope of the future—the knowledge of the Deity—and the mode in which the service of man to God would be acceptable to him. No happiness, as experience tells us, is equal to religious happiness; and a being conscious of immortality without hope, or dependence upon God, and therefore without some knowledge of God, would be more miserable than the beasts that perish. *As an improving and progressing being*, which our own eyes perceive the human race from generation to generation to be, man would have required, at the very beginning, the knowledge of language, which could not have been invented by any conceivable, unaided human powers<sup>3</sup>; and he must also have known and

<sup>2</sup> See many writers on this point, especially Delany's *Revelation examined with candour*, i. 1—8. Hartley on *Man*, ii. 138.

<sup>3</sup> On the Origin of Language, see Delany's *Revelation examined with candour*, dissert. iv. 34—42. Warburton's *Divine Legation*, iii. 105. Hart-

ley on *Man*, vol. iii. Prop. xxvii. p. 138—141.

The Deistical notions of those who imagine a mere human origin of language,—Voltaire, F. Simon, Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, Adam Smith, L'Abbe Condillac, and others,—are strangely improbable.

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begun the practice of labour, which is the only true origin of all arts, sciences, refinement, leisure, taste, and other mental felicities. Now, precisely such things as our reason might have expected, we have sufficient evidence to believe have been granted to us. As *a being intended to live in this world*, we are either expressly informed, or we may fairly infer, that God granted to man by revelation the knowledge of food; the use of clothing; and the ordinance of marriage—the sacred institution from whence proceed the domestic relationships and the first charms of society. As *an immortal being* he was impressed by revelation with the knowledge of the Deity and the way to serve Him; and, as the hope of immortality implies another state of existence, and as the mind might be expected to improve for ever in that immortality, therefore it might be anticipated that some things should be only partially revealed, to be understood hereafter; or, in other words, that faith, or a principle which induces us to expect the future explanation of propositions which we are now commanded to believe to be true, though we cannot, in the present life, fully discern their object, or meaning, would be required of us. This was done at first in the institution of sacrifice—an arbitrary enactment which represented the great propitiation, which reason could not have discovered; and which is still the great mystery of mysteries, which forms the link between the knowledge and the faith required in the present life, and the development of the plans of the Deity which shall take place in the future life. The doctrine of the atonement is that portion of revelation which involves every other truth interesting to man as an immortal being. As *a progressing race* he was commanded to labour till the earth was subdued—that is, till the result of his labours had produced that wealth, leisure, civilization, improvement, knowledge of the arts and sciences, and literature of life; together with the amelioration of all classes from the peasant to the sovereign; which shall constitute, in union with the government of the mind by revelation, the highest earthly felicity to which an ever-improving race is capable of obtaining in this world: while, as all that is earthly perishes with mortality, the results of revelation would remain, as the germ of that ever-developing and spiritual improvement which shall continually approach to God, though it never attains to Deity. The two

words, labour and revelation, imply all that can be required for the happiness of a being who is at once *mortal, immortal, and improving*; and there is sufficient evidence to induce us to believe, that these are the designs of God; and that thus did the Creator begin, from the very beginning, to make provision for the happiness of man according to his nature, and according to his place in the universe.

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We have now nothing to say respecting the sentence of labour which is to end in the earthly improvement of the race as a mortal being. Our subject refers not only, but principally to his happiness as an immortal, and as a perpetually progressing being. As the idea of improvement, then, implies a prior imperfection, and also various stages of progress, we might further naturally expect that the revelation which the Creator and Preserver of man imparted to him, would not be completed at the commencement of his existence upon earth; but that there would be a gradual development of that revelation suited to, and adapted to, this power of perpetual progression. If revelation had been confined to the first generation of mankind, it is possible that it might have been soon forgotten, or soon perverted. Revelation was essential to his happiness at the first, to elevate him from a condition which, without revelation, would have been ignorance and misery. His continued improvement depended upon his retaining the knowledge of revelation. The secret of his progressiveness consisted in his so doing. If he lost revelation, he sunk into ignorance, degradation, and misery. The uniform testimony of the history of man from the beginning, declares to us, that though the improvement which the human race has eventually made is very great, yet it has been subject to continual retrogressions and fluctuations, according to the manner in which they adhered to or neglected the great revelation<sup>4</sup>. Two things, therefore, might be anticipated—one, that the whole mass of revelation should not be imparted to one generation of man; the other, that every addition which

<sup>4</sup> For the truth of this opinion, that the human race is progressing in all ages to eventual improvement, read Edwards on Redemption, Dean Hall's Bampton Lectures, Law's Theory of Religion, Ferguson on the Progress of

Civil Society, and a pamphlet by Douglas of Cavers, written on the more political subject of Civil Religion. An admirable article on the same subject appeared also in the North American Review some years ago.

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should be made in any age, should be only a continuation of the development of the primitive or earliest manifestation. We believe that we have sufficient evidence to say that this has been done. Revelation has been imparted in various portions, and at different times through the space of four thousand years; and the whole mass of divinely communicated knowledge is but the gradually making more plain, (to keep up the attention of mankind,) this one great scheme of the plan of Providence, which assures the human race that whatever be the temporary, moral, mental, social, or individual sorrow of a certain number of generations; more good shall be deduced eventually from that mass of evil than would have existed if that previous evil had not been known. The whole of this mighty maze, and the plan of the government of the world, of which it is a portion, is expressed in the commencement of the records of revelation, which contains the germ of all the mysteries of evil, and the solution of those mysteries; "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." There must be—that is, for many thousand years—a perpetual conflict between good and evil; but the course of the world shall be so ordered, that the good shall prevail in a manner which shall be gradually declared in prophecy, and eventually accomplished in history. As the tree is said to be contained in the acorn, so the whole substance of the slowly completed revelation is contained in the commencement, which declares the beginning of evil upon earth—its incessant conflict with good—and its final overthrow in the triumph of the Bruiser of the serpent's head.

The manner in which this revelation was imparted in every age was the same as that by which it was begun to be communicated at the first. The usual mode in which men obtain ideas is by the senses—by perception, sensation, relative suggestion, or by the autonomic power attributed to the mind by Kant and others. In all these modes of receiving the impression of ideas, the mind is able to trace one thought to some previous train of thought. Revelation is only the impartation of impressions on the mind without previous trains of thought on the part of the recipient, by the immediate invisible agency of the omnipresent Deity. If God could create the human mind—if He could give laws to mind,

he can act upon the mind in bestowing impressions, biasses, thoughts, suggestions, or ideas, which shall become incorporated with the other masses of thought deducible from the usual sources of reflection. This must have been done in the beginning, in the absence of instinct. This may, therefore, have been done whenever human necessity demanded interposition. We have sufficient evidence to believe that it has been done; and upon that evidence, which proves the truth of conclusions which might have been anticipated as probable; we receive from the Author of the primæval existence of man the mass of records which now constitutes the completed revelation. His mind was impressed "at sundry times and in divers manners," in modes which were more than human. These impressions were generally thoughts relating to His duties, though some of them were discoveries concerning Deity and a future state. Some of them were precepts referring to the occasion, on which it was required of the inspired person to speak. Whether the impressions on the mind, from the invisible world, related to the future, and were called prophecy; or whether they were precepts referring to the age in which they were spoken, or precepts of a more general nature, adapted to all times; the person who was thus inspired to speak, was generally enabled to give proof that his words did not proceed from his own sagacity, conclusions, caprice, passion, or reasoning. He was generally enabled to do many actions, as superhuman as the words he uttered. In other words, prophecy or revelation was demonstrated to be divine by miracle. At the end of four thousand years the chief prophecies were fulfilled; the development of the system of redemption, upon which alone the true improvement of man can be established, was completed; and revelation has been granted to make provision for all the wants of man *as a mortal* inhabiting the present world—*as an immortal being*, hoping for a better life—and *as a race of beings destined to go on improving*, till they attain to greater union, and more perfect felicity, even in the present life.

The evidences for the truth of those records, which we believe to contain that revelation which began with the creation of man, and which were thus gradually imparted, till all the knowledge which man required respecting God, his destiny, his immortality, and his happiness, as a mortal,

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immortal, and progressing race, are too numerous and undeniable to be here treated. It would be quite foreign to my object to discuss the proofs which amount to a moral demonstration of their certainty. Yet we may pause with delight to contemplate the manner in which all the anticipations of our reason have been fulfilled, in the manner in which that revelation has been given and preserved for the use and improvement of man.

There is then in common use a book, the several portions of which have been written at different times, by more than forty inspired persons, within an interval of about sixteen hundred years. This book is so plain, that the most ignorant person, the way-faring man, though a fool, can learn from it all that is essential to him as an immortal being; while it is so profound, that the learning of the whole world has long been and is still required to elucidate it. Thousands and tens of thousands of the most enlightened and laborious scholars and students have been employed to illustrate it; but, like the visible creation, which is the other work of its great author, the study of this book is exhaustless. As a student may look abroad upon the external world, and always find new discoveries in science, in astronomy, botany, or any other branch of human contemplation—and yet, the peasant can admire the stars, and the fields, and rejoice in the mercy and goodness of God, though he possesses not the knowledge of the former—so it is that the philosopher, the metaphysician, the general student, or the theologian, may perpetually find new sources of contemplation in this book; yet the meanest and the humblest may walk in its light, and admire and be refreshed by the perpetual beauty and wisdom of the sacred volume. Part of this book is received by Jews, part by Mahometans, and all by Christians. This book is not, properly speaking, revelation itself. It is the record of the revelation which the Creator has made of his government of the world. The Deity might have granted to mankind the knowledge of his will, and left the human race to hand that knowledge down from father to son, for ever, by tradition. This mode of communicating His will would have occasioned much corruption and confusion, unless in each instance there had been continued the Divine superintendence and interposition. To prevent this evil, the revelation of the plans by which

the world is governed, was committed at a certain time to writing; an art which can only be traced by tradition to that precise period at which, like that of printing at a later time, its invention would be most useful to man. The seasonableness of great discoveries will be, to a reflecting mind, one additional proof of the superintendence over the human race, by its wonderful Creator and Preserver.

The first records of revelation respected the origin and progress of man; and explained the causes of his present existing in a state in which his happiness is infinitely more imperfect, if he were merely mortal, than that of the unreflecting instinct-governed animals. Certain additions to the Mosaic records were made at various times, as the progress of mankind required, until the whole sum of knowledge which it was necessary for man to receive was imparted; and contained in the completed volume of the Old and New Testament. This is the one revelation. This alone contains the development of the designs and plans of the Governor of the world. This alone informs us of the adaptation of a gradual communication vouchsafed to mankind prior to experience, literature, or general civilization, anticipating the great results of these blessings, as the improvement of man was able to bear more frequent impartations of knowledge. This alone conducts us from the infancy of man to his maturity, when history and literature began. This alone is the ray of light beaming from the clouds of darkness which cover the ages preceding the creation of man. This alone connects the portion of eternity which is to come, with the portion of eternity which is past; and reveals to man his weakness and his greatness, his misery and his hope, his evils and their remedy, his hopelessness if he rejects, and his dignity when he accepts redemption.

If this be the origin, nature, and value of revelation, what ought to be its influence and authority upon the human mind?

The authority of that law which is proved by satisfactory evidence to proceed from Deity, must be, or ought to be, more influential than obligations arising from any other source. Man, *as the mortal being*, requires morality. The best foundation for that morality is neither experience, which is the real origin of human law, nor shame, nor necessity, nor any human motive,

but the will of God. Man, as an *immortal being*, requires hope of the future; the repose of the soul upon omnipresence, and the separation of his motives from merely earthly sources of action: that is, he requires holiness; or that abstract spiritual obedience to the will of God which constitutes the highest, purest, mental happiness: and this can only proceed from belief in divine revelation<sup>5</sup>. Man, as an *improving or progressing race*, requires that the individuals of which society is composed, be governed by these two classes of motives, the result of which will be the assigning to their proper place, and defining within their due limits, all the classes of laws which experience proves to be necessary for the better government of society. The great object of revelation, and therefore the best description of the influence and authority which revelation ought to possess, is, to establish the foundation of all laws, all improvements in civilization, literature, and other sources of human good, upon the responsibility of man to God; and not upon the responsibility of man to man. All other hopes, motives, biasses, sanctions, and sources of action and decision whatever, are to be regarded as inferior to those which are derived from revelation. It was thus that revelation was received in all the several periods in which it was imparted to mankind. The three principal portions or stages of this impartation of revelation extended respectively from the creation to the time when the improvement of the world required that the ancestor of the Jewish nation should be called from the rest of the world to be the founder of a people to whom the preservation of revelation should be committed for a time. This was called the patriarchal dispensation. The second extended from the time of Abraham, or, as it is more frequently dated, from Moses, to the time when the Saviour appeared. The third, including the dispensation of the Baptist, began with

<sup>5</sup> I think it is the author of the Pursuits of Literature who quotes with approbation the sentiment of Plato, that religion is the flight or aspiring of the invisible spirit of man to Deity—the *φυγή μόνου πρὸς μόνον*. This, indeed, is the same sentiment as that of faith considered as a motive to action, placing the soul in juxta-position with Deity, if such an expression may be used, and believing its felicity to be placed

on omnipresence. He whose motives to action are thus founded will agree with our poet—

“A soul immortal wasting all its fires—  
Thrown into tumult, raptured, or alarm’d  
At aught this scene can threaten or indulge,  
Resembles ocean into tempest tossed,  
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.”

YOUNG.

the ministry of Christ. Through the whole of these three divisions of the system of redemption the same truths were taught, though with gradually increasing clearness; the same duties were inculcated; the same institutions, in spirit, though not in the letter, were observed. There has never been more than one religion. This religion began at the introduction of man into the world. It continued through patriarchism, and was corrupted into idolatry, heathenism, and paganism. It was carried on in Judaism, which was corrupted into Pharisaism. It has been preserved and completed in Christianity. Christianity is only the third stage of the one true religion, which began at the creation, and which will be ended with our immortality. The authority, therefore, of Christianity over the affections and the conscience, must not only be greater than that of the former portions of revelation, which were but imperfect developments of the will of God; it must be greater, also, than all subsequent authorities, in whatever quarter they may originate, or whatever be their philosophy, their instruction, or their teaching. The will of God alone, discovered to us in revelation, is to possess absolute influence and control over the mind and heart of man.

This unreserved affirmation of the exclusive authority and influence of revelation on the mind of man, considered in all his relations, will appear to be proving too much, unless we now define with clearness the extent of the authority we attribute to the human administrators of that revelation. Every individual among men was not formerly, and is not now, favoured with superhuman impressions on his mind, as the source of ideas. A certain number only in every age, were chosen to convey to their fellow-men the will of the Invisible. When did this superhuman communication cease? And, what is the authority, and what ought to be the influence of those who were or are the dispensers to man of the will of God?

All knowledge which was essential to the improvement and happiness of man was only then imparted to the world, when the final revelation was impressed on the mind of the last superhuman teacher, and recorded by him in writing for our benefit. The interference from the invisible Creator, with the usual discipline of mind by which it derived all its ideas

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from the senses, reflection, and combination, then ceased. This continued interference was ended by giving to mankind two sources of instruction: one was the inspired, or Theopneusted Scriptures; the other was the Theopneusted teacher, who had first spoken and then recorded his portion of the common revelation. These two sources of knowledge co-existed together till the volume of revelation was completed. So long as they thus co-existed, their joint authority composed the one influence of revelation. It was the authority of God himself. Opposition to that authority was sometimes punished with temporal death; and the rejection of that authority was declared by both to be the cause of that rejection from the best mercies of God in our immortality, which is the curse, the misery, and the spiritual death of the soul. The earliest converts, therefore, to Christianity, at the moment of the perfecting of revelation, so long as the last witness of the New Testament, and the gift of inspiration by which it was written, continued; were governed by an actual Theocracy, of which the sanctions were sometimes as certainly temporal as the law of Moses, which inflicted open and visible punishments on its despisers. The authority of the teachers of revelation, therefore, at this time, was divine, infallible, and supreme; and nearly all things which the Church of Rome has declared concerning itself, and its own lofty pretensions in subsequent ages, concerning the authority and dignity of its priesthood, could have been spoken with justice, of the apostolic dispensers of revelation in the age of its general inspiration. The time, however, arrived when that inspiration was withdrawn from human teachers, and it remained only in the now completed volume of revelation. The consequence was, that the authority of the sacred volume alone remained inspired, divine, infallible, and supreme; the authority of the teacher became uninspired, human, fallible, and inferior: and this new character very soon appeared in the most early period after the withdrawing of the Theopneusty from the converts. The earliest Christian authors and teachers who flourished after the cessation of the miraculous impartation of revelation, abound with sentiments which are frequently irrational, unscriptural, and erroneous. They are of admirable use as the keepers and witnesses of Holy Writ. They maintained the traditions of the apostles,

Heb. x. 28.

which had become the institutions of Christianity; such as the observance of the first day of the week, admitting women to the sacrament, and baptizing of infants. They abound with much that is useful, wise, and good: but they no less abound with the most wild and uncritical interpretations of Scripture, with unreasonable maxims, strange opinions, and uncouth legends, dreams, and fancies. The stream of the waters of life became more muddy as they receded from the fountain. It was darkened on one bank by the mire of the Jews and heathens, and on the other by the weeds of unsupported traditions<sup>6</sup>. The external discipline of the church, its apostolical succession, and what is better than both these, its reverence for the pages of Scripture, was maintained to the uttermost by the first-fruits of Christianity<sup>7</sup>: but when God willed that inspiration should cease, then the authority of the administrator of the revealed will became lessened; he was

<sup>6</sup> Jortin is too flippant to be frequently quoted as an authority, and he speaks too severely, because too generally, of traditions. Many of our most common Christian observances were in uniform use in the best and purest ages of antiquity. In the sense in which traditions are useful institutions, they deserve no censure unless their advocates substitute them for Scripture, or make them equal with Scripture in authority over the conscience. But in the usual sense of traditions, that they are mere legends, handed down from uncertain sources, and invented in remote times, I agree with Jortin, that such traditions and such antiquity are "the muddy fountains of everlasting nonsense."

Mr. Chevallier justly remarks, in his Sermon at Durham, before the Sons of the Clergy (1837), that tradition is used in the Church of England as evidence, not authority.

<sup>7</sup> The learned Whitby has given the church one of the best works on this subject. Its title and object are these: *Dissertatio de Scripturarum interpretatione secundum patrum commentarios; in qua probatur:—Primo, sanctam scripturam esse regulam fidei unicam, ex qua de omnibus articulis fidei creditu necessariis ad salutem iudicium ferendum est. 2º, Patres, sive Primævos, sive subsequentes, non esse idoneos S. Scripturæ interpretes. 3º, Non posse controversias de S. Trinitate motas, ex patribus, conciliis aut*

*traditione vere Catholicâ certo definire.*

In the tenth page of his preface he explains his object more fully:—*Res sana hæc dignissima est, quæ in honorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi et tractetur fusius, et accuratius expendatur. Quod ut felicius expediam, in me probandum suscipio:*

1º, *S. Scripturas in rebus ad salutem necessariis interprete non egere, in non necessariis minime postulare.*

2º, *S. Scripturas sibi ipsis interpretum officio fungi posse.*

3º, *Novam hanc methodum Scripturas ex patrum placitis interpretandi, nec tutam, nec rationi consonam esse: sed in multis fallacem, periculi plenam, veritati, Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ sententiæ, patrumque fere omnium unanimi iudicio, multis modis repugnare.*

4º, *Argumenta quibus vir doctus [sc. Chillingworth] sententiam suam probare nititur, nullius plane roboris esse, multaque precaria, falsa nonnulla, et experientiæ prorsus contraria continere.*

The book has never been reprinted. It was published in 8vo. London, 1714.

The celebrated passage of Milton, "Whatever time, with his huge drag-net, hath handed down to us of gold and gems, of shells and sea-weed, &c. these are the Fathers," I take for granted is well known to the reader. The best notion which a common book can give us of the value of the Fathers, is Walchius' *Bibliotheca Patristica*. Jena, 1770 and 1834.

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changed from the dispenser of the revealed will, to the interpreter of the revealed will of God. Revelation was confined to the Scripture alone. It was not shared by an uninspired man, supernaturally impressed with ideas from an invisible state. The office of interpreter succeeded to the office of receiver and communicator of inspiration. The authority of the written book became the primary guide to all converts: because the God of revelation had imparted equally to all the perfect volume of his will. The interpreter, whose office unavoidably continued, because the mass of mankind had not leisure to study the volume of revelation as they might have desired to do; became possessed of no other authority as an interpreter, than he was entitled to demand from his accuracy, holiness, or knowledge: and the power was restored to all mankind which they had originally possessed in the person of their primæval ancestor (the first possessor of the incipient revealed will of God), to communicate with their Maker in faith, meditation, and prayer, founded on the knowledge of the perfected revelation of his will.

This statement will appear at first sight to form a denial of all authority on the part of the Christian teacher, to enforce the conclusions of revelation on the converts to Christianity in after-ages. It will be found, however, when we proceed to consider the nature and influence of the ecclesiastical authority, that while the teacher possesses neither the authority of a continuer of direct revelation, nor the authority of the society, or church, of which he is a member; yet, that he possesses just so much authority as is essential to the upholding the influence of revelation, and therefore to the good of the converts. We may, however, illustrate the nature of the authority of the interpreter of revelation by pursuing the analogy which appears to be naturally derivable from the authority assigned by the author of revelation to the two classes of teachers; to whom were respectively committed the power of instruction in the two former stages of the common, but gradually imparted, revelation.

The teachers of patriarchism, the first stage of revelation, were the heads of families<sup>s</sup>. They were at once kings to rule,

<sup>s</sup> On the subject of the resting of the Holy Spirit on the heads of tribes, so as to continue the revelation of God, when it was necessary that additional

knowledge should be imparted to man, see the various notes of the commentators and writers on the early parts of Scripture.

prophets to receive revelation and to impart instruction, and priests to offer sacrifices as the revelation had commanded, immediately that man had been placed in the condition in which he now exists. The authority, therefore, of the patriarchal teacher was absolute. The chief of the family was at once priest, king, and instructor. Mankind were not formed into large communities or nations, but were rather divided according to their families, or clans, in smaller and united societies, at the head of which was the father, or his first-born, or the noblest and best representative of his family in the place of the first-born. This head of the family possessed the power of the magistrate to punish, of the inspired prophet to teach, and of the priest to sacrifice. If we may judge from the conduct of the patriarch Judah, towards one of his own family, the authority of the king and priest in the early ages was most arbitrary and extensive. "Bring her out," he said, concerning his offending daughter-in-law, "and let her be burnt." This kind of authority could not be permitted in a more advanced stage of society, *and the authority of the patriarchal priesthood, therefore, may be described as the authority of a father over his infant children.* Gen. xxxviii. 24.

The teachers of Judaism, the second stage of revelation, who were also priests, but not kings, consisted of the members of one family, who were solemnly set apart, consecrated, and appointed to their office. Their duties, which were most strictly defined, and from which no deviation was permitted, were to attend upon the sacrifices, to instruct the people, and to act as judges. All the ritual of Moses was introductory to a better order of things, which was to be established at that period of fitness and improvement, when the human race was most prepared for some better instruction, than could be afforded either by the speculations of the heathenism, which was but corrupted patriarchism, or by the severe enactments of the law of Moses. This period is called *the fulness of time*. Till that time arrived, the law of Moses served as a guide, or schoolmaster<sup>1</sup>, to the Church, disciplining,

Gal. iv. 4.  
Eph. i. 10.

<sup>1</sup> The word *παιδαγωγός* is used by St. Paul to express the object of the law of Moses, Gal. iii. 24, 25. The word "schoolmaster" does not adequately express its meaning. It denotes a severe trainer, guardian, companion, and leader from infancy to youth. In this sense it

well describes the object of the Mosaic institutions.

But see, on the translation of the word in our authorized version, Turton's "Remarks on the Text of the English Bible, as now printed by the Universities," p. 68, 2nd ed. Cambridge, 1833.

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and controlling, and limiting the freedom of the human mind, till it was fitted for greater liberty by possessing a more matured judgment. *The authority of the Jewish priesthood was that of a tutor over his pupils.* The human mind was in the second stage of its improvement and progress; and, to use the expression of inspiration itself, it was under "tutors and governors" until the time appointed for its enlargement.

If, then, the authority of the patriarchal priesthood appears to have been that of a parent over infant children, and that of the Judaical priesthood of a tutor over pupils, I would maintain the analogy, which is, I think, warranted by all the circumstances of the case; and say, *that the authority of the Christian teacher*, whether he be rightly or not called a priest over the consciences of the members of Christ's universal Church, *is that of a father over grown-up, adult, rational, reasoning, and well-instructed children.* All authority is one of these three kinds: it is either divine, or human, or conventional, by the mixture of the two. The divine authority governs us without appeal. Human authority governs us by force or influence, and is submitted to from convenience or fear, without reference to conscience. Conventional authority is that union of the divine in its origin, and of the human in its exercise; which commands and requires obedience and submission on account of its source; unless there be injustice, unreasonableness, or caprice in its enactments. Such is the authority of a father, of a legal and constitutional government, and (in a lower sense) of an aged friend, of a wise and experienced counsellor. In describing the authority of an uninspired priesthood, therefore, as being partly divine and partly human, partly given to him by Christ, and partly by the Church which submits to him, as reflecting and good adult children will listen with reverence to a parent; I place the authority of the priesthood or teacher in the very highest rank. The divine power of the father is maintained by the acknowledgment of the apostolical succession as the credentials of his authority. The inspired volume is the guide of conduct both to the father and to the members of the Church, his children. He teaches the children, and advises them from the page of inspiration. They listen with deference, respect, and love, but as to a human and not a divine teacher. His

duty is to teach truth; their duty is to believe that his teaching is truth, unless they possess abundant and undeniable proof that his teaching is undoubted error. And herein consists the wisdom, and one of the proofs of the truth, of Christianity when considered with reference to the actual circumstances of mankind. The majority of the Christian priesthood, or ministry, has gone wrong. It has taught error. The members of the Church of Christ listened to their teaching, submitted to their authority, permitted the most intolerable severity to be the sanction of their laws, stood for century after century at the feet of their instructors, and listened with patience and traditional or family respect; until the teachings of the human father became so totally inconsistent with the pure law by which both were to be governed, that the divine origin of this power was no longer an argument sufficient to convince them. The conventional influence was broken, and the members of the Church, appealing to the volume of Scripture, declared to their fathers, the Bishops of the universal Church, that their teaching was erroneous; and demanded the return of their instructors to the more correct interpretation of the word of God. The children appealed to the law, which both acknowledged to be good, against an erring and arbitrary parent. The parent has not yet acknowledged the justice of the appeal. Some of his children remain firm in their allegiance; others continue their appeal to the Scripture, and refuse obedience till the fathers of the Churches consent to be ruled by the common law of God: and though they differ with each other in some points of its interpretation, yet they are firm in withholding submission to their erring parents. In England—religious, enlightened, and thoughtful England—the priesthood, and the fathers of its Church, regarded the request of its children at the Reformation; and spake to their children the words of the Scriptures of truth. They requested the reasoning sons to judge of the instructions of their fathers, by the declarations of the word of God. With us the inspired teacher is the guide to the uninspired. The word of God is made the law to which both the priest and the layman, the father and the son, appeal. The Church meets among us in the union of conventional discipline and teaching on the one hand, with conventional submission and respect on the other. The uninspired priesthood did not always consider these things.

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They knew the origin of their authority to be divine, but they forgot that it was also conventional. Long before the Reformation, the sons began to question the truth of the teachings of the priesthood, and to compare them with the word of God. They are still bound to listen with respect to the instructions of the priesthood, to learn whether those instructions are consistent with the inspired volume; but both the laity and the priesthood are required to aim at the restoration of that golden period when, though inspiration was ceasing and error beginning, the father and the sons were happy in their communion as the one family of Christ; and when the priesthood did not exceed the limits of their authority, which, though divine in its origin, is conventional and human in its exercise,—the authority of an aged father over adult and reasoning children, both of whom are to be guided, and directed, and controlled by the one infallible revelation. In other words, the extent of the influence of the revelation from heaven upon the minds of all, whether teachers or taught, is so supreme and absolute; that the priest in his instruction, and the people in their attention, are equally bound by its precepts and sanction. Nothing is to be taught by the one, nothing to be received as certain by the other, but that which is commanded by the theopneusted revelation. Both have, therefore, an equal power of appealing to its pages to learn the propositions which are to be enforced and welcomed. As the teacher and the student of astronomy refer alike to the appearances and motions of the heavenly bodies to justify the one in declaring, and the other in believing, the truths of that science; or, as the teacher and the student of botany refer alike to the growth and development of plants in the field or hot-house for the truths of the theories of Linnæus, Ray, or Tournefort; and as the visible creation is open to both, that both may be judged as to their knowledge and improvement; so it is with revelation. The Bible is the book which declares the glory of God. It is to be read by all, and judged by all. The lessons of the teacher, the progress of the learner, and the spiritual advancement of both, are to be ascertained by its discoveries. The minister is the interpreter, and the hearer is to judge of the interpretation. Revelation is to guide both, so that one is to instruct without presumption or usurpation; the other, while he receives nothing without conviction, is to reject

nothing merely from caprice. Theopneusted revelation alone is infallible, supreme, and divine. It is the word of the Creator, spoken individually to the soul; and man, whether mortal or immortal, as an individual, or progressive through thousands of generations as a developing and improving race, is responsible to his Creator alone for the use which he makes of that revelation; whose authority is without appeal, because it is thus infallible, supreme, and divine.

## SECTION II.

### *On the Nature and Limits of the Influence of Human Reason.*

THIS view of the responsibility of man to his Maker, for the use which he makes of an infallible, supreme, and divine revelation, places the reason of man in its proper position. Because revelation was thus coeval in its origin with the human race; and because it imparted to man all that knowledge concerning himself and his destiny, and God and his Providence, which could not possibly have been obtained from instinct or from experience, from reflection or association, from relative suggestion or from any other source of human knowledge—and because the superhuman impressing of ideas upon the mind for the benefit of others at length ceased—and because the improvement of the human race, which was one great object of its existence, was left, after the completion of the written revelation, to the inspired book and to the uninspired teacher—it then became evident that every person who was possessed of equal knowledge and equal mental cultivation with the uninspired teacher, became equally competent with him to decide upon evidence, on the truth or falsehood of the inferences, which he derived from revelation. Those who were not thus competent were compelled to learn from his authority, as a child learns from his parent, or a scholar from his master: but all were required to believe, on account of the infinite importance of the interests which were involved in their conclusions. Of the belief in the doctrines and truths of Christianity, which is founded upon the authority of the teacher, without examination, or inquiry, or doubting at any time, I am not now speaking. Happy is the man who can implicitly believe the Christian teacher as a

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child believes its parent; and who can pass on, from time into eternity, fearing God, and placing his hope of happiness in his immortality on the only foundation of all happiness, the redemption recorded in revelation. I am speaking, however, of that belief which demands and insists upon evidence, and which implies, therefore, the exercise of our reason. While the implicit faith which demands no evidence, but is contented to repose upon the testimony of the teacher, is most invaluable, and while millions and tens of millions are contented with this alone; the faith which rests upon evidence is more satisfactory. One is the food of the soul supporting life without any previous hunger, the other is the same food, filling the desire of the soul; but imparting more zest and pleasure because of the previous uneasiness, which was the hunger and thirst of the spirit. It is not absolutely necessary, as some have affirmed, that a Christian should doubt. His faith will be soothing, devotional, and elevating, without any other effort of intellect than to assent to the propositions placed before him: but one admirable excellence of Christianity is, that it invites, it courts, it implores the rational, thinking, reflecting individual to examine its evidences, to judge for himself, to conclude after inquiry, and then to believe, as one who is responsible only to the Creator of the soul that reasons; to the inspirer of the volume which is his guide. The happiness which arises in the mind of him who complies with this invitation will be always greater than that of the dependant upon the authority of the uninspired teacher; because, while his hope of future blessedness in his immortality will be equally intense, and his conduct in the present life be equally holy; the intellect will be more improved, because it is more frequently exercised: and that exercise is, in itself, the highest degree of happiness next to the spiritual obedience of the heart. He who contemplates the philosophy of Christianity, will ever find that one argument for its truth may be derived from the manner in which it satisfies this desire of the human mind, to believe upon evidence instead of depending upon authority. The whole mass of revelation is founded upon history. It is a collection of facts. Neither Christ nor his Apostles preached or taught dogmatically only; they appealed to evidence. "Believe me, for the very works' sake," was the request of the former. The signs, or proofs, of my Apostleship were wrought among you, says one of the

latter (2 Cor. xii. 12), in miracles. Both, like the teachers of the olden time before them, appealed to evidence to satisfy inquiry and convince the intellect, while the doctrines they inculcated instructed the heart, and elevated the affections.

We have said, that man, as a race, improves from age to age. The very notion of improvement implies a prior deficiency both of the moral and spiritual excellence, which must be removed by the constant use of reason, as well as by the aid of revelation. Improvement implies that the erroneous conclusions in one age, which have been founded upon few facts, and imperfect experience, must be removed by the enlarged knowledge of facts, and the more extensive experience of another age: and as these conclusions are embodied in the form of laws, maxims, customs, and observances, which command respect from their antiquity and supposed usefulness among one generation; while they are considered to be obsolete, oppressive, and useless to another generation; improvement implies attachment among some, doubt with others, and controversy, which is but the effort to elicit useful truth, with a third. It implies the attacks with zeal, the defence with pertinacity, the severity which is called persecution, as soon as it can be overthrown; or the mildness, which is called weakness, when it may be defied with impunity. It implies agitation and restlessness, and changes in dynasties and governments. It implies the incessant, endless exercise of the reason of man; and the result of that exercise, greater happiness to the human race.—It is impossible, therefore, if mankind be destined eventually to attain the highest good of which his nature is capable, to prevent the evils which are first to exist, and then to be overruled to the establishment of that great æra; when the experience of ages shall have led to such useful conclusions, that the laws and customs and maxims, which generally prevail among mankind, shall be those universally received and welcomed; as the best and wisest which can benefit and improve society.

The appeal, then, of Christianity to our reason, and the power of perpetual improvement which is the characteristic of the human race, assure us, that whatever be the excellence and perfection of revelation, ample scope remains for the employment of our reason. Many well-intentioned persons have imagined, that the exercise of our reason in matters of

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religion, is superseded by the completed revelation given to us in the volume of Scripture. Others have believed that its necessity is destroyed by the authority of the Christian priesthood, and the traditions of the visible Church. We acknowledge a divine revelation to be infallible. We consider the teaching of the meanest individual among the priesthood—much more the uniform teaching of the general mass of teachers—to be entitled to the utmost deference. What then, it will be said, is the use, and what the province, of reason in matters of religious enquiry?

We give the best and usual answer to this question. The province of reason in matters of religion is twofold. It is to ascertain, by a careful examination of the evidence, what is Revelation. And having done this, it is to learn, by an impartial study of all authorities—whether of criticism, tradition, analogy, cautious conjecture in the absence of certain testimony, and all other sources of information—what is the true meaning of any particular portion, and what is the general object of the whole system revealed. Reason is that faculty of the mind by which it is enabled to derive conclusions, by various processes of thought, from the previous knowledge of certain facts, truths, and propositions<sup>2</sup>. Few reason deeply; for infancy is governed by the senses; childhood submits passively to its teachers; youth combines ideas with incoherence, and is imaginative rather than ratiocinative; manhood and age are absorbed by worldly pursuits, and limit their powers of inferring, to the few premises afforded them by their station, place, or circumstances. Sloth will not reason. Selfishness, arising from the fear lest conviction cause uneasiness by clashing with ease or interest, dare not. Yet all reason a little. The very believer in the infallibility of the teacher who instructs his pupil in the sinfulness of doubt, and therefore of inquiry, reasons on the supposed wickedness of rejecting the precepts of his master, at the very time when he desires to avoid all reason. The most indifferent and careless person reasons unavoidably and unconsciously every hour of his life. To prevent all reasoning, therefore, is as impossible

<sup>2</sup> This is the general definition of reason by Locke. See his Essay, book iv. chap. 17.

as to prevent seeing or hearing. The only question between the objectors to reason, relates to the extent, the subjects, and the advantages of this employment of the understanding.

Before the mind, however, examines the evidences of revelation, it is certainly able to attain to the consciousness of its own weakness, and, therefore, to perceive the necessity of some other director than its own experience. It may perceive that design proves a designer; that the designer must possess the attributes assigned by theologians to the Deity. It may perceive that since knowledge must be useful to man in all stages of his existence, and such knowledge can only be slowly obtained, it is probable, therefore, that there would be a communication of some knowledge to man by revelation; and thus, that the wisdom which would be the result of experience, would be partially anticipated as the necessities of man required. It might believe, for instance, that as morality is useful to man, the knowledge of duty embodied in the Ten Commandments would probably be imparted as the foundation of social happiness; prior to the discoveries of the foundation of morals submitted to the world in the pages of Plato, Plutarch, Seneca, Paley, or Whewell. As the arbitrary teaching of the child must precede the knowledge of the necessity of such teaching when the child becomes a man; so it would be probable, that man in the infancy of his existence should be instructed and commanded, for the sake of his own happiness, to obey a Divine Creator; long before he could comprehend the motive to obedience by the experience of its advantages. For the same causes, also, reason might believe, that knowledge, which its own researches cannot give respecting itself, the soul, its nature, and its destiny; might be partially afforded to induce man to reflect, and act, with reference to his immortality, long before the period when the accumulation of property in families and communities had exempted some of their members from the necessity of daily toil, and therefore permitted leisure. The philosopher and the student in earlier days began to speculate upon the philosophy of the human mind, and to talk gravely yet uselessly, learnedly yet absurdly, upon the existence or non-existence of matter, space, time, autonomy, the moral sense, the moral capacity, and many other topics which have made the metaphysical diviner mad; and sharpened the intellect without converting

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the soul<sup>3</sup>. Reason may justly believe, that as the knowledge of God, of the soul, and of immortality, are utterly indispensable to the happiness of man, such knowledge would be given before it could be excogitated by philosophers for the benefit of subsequent generations.

When the consciousness of its own weakness, and the conviction of the necessity of some moral and mental teaching to instruct the soul, has thus led the human mind to anticipate the probability of a revelation; it must form, at the same time, some faint notion of what that revelation would declare to him. Before, therefore, the inquirer would examine the external evidences of the truth of the propositions which were affirmed to be of more than human origin; he would believe, that if a revelation were thus essential, it

<sup>3</sup> No branch of knowledge or study is to be despised; and I do not mean to speak contemptuously of that noble study, the science of mind; but metaphysical researches never can supply the place of revealed religion. If we read and ponder the history of metaphysical inquiries from the earliest philosophers who employed their leisure in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, in vain contemplations on the origin of the universe, the greatest good of man, the probable immortality of the soul, and other subjects; we shall find that their speculations prove only the weakness of reason, the energy of mind, the power of curiosity, the wreck of previous patriarchal tradition and knowledge\*, the impossibility of comprehending either Deity, or the plan of the government of the world, or the ultimate destiny of man in the present, or of the soul in a future state. They relate to the human mind alone in its present condition, and as being possibly or probably immortal. They explain nothing of the difference between the soul and the spirit. Christianity, is founded upon the truth of this proposition; that as the human mind is persuaded to action by the love of a parent, the ambition of a chieftain, or the example of a neighbour, so is it influenced in some mysterious manner from the invisible world by a good spirit, or by evil spirits. It informs us that the soul of man even at present, is in a twofold state of existence, from both of which it receives

influential impressions. The English, Scotch, and Irish metaphysicians have discussed the nature and the powers of the human mind without much reference to these things; and Kant, their German coadjutor, who is obscure from the muddiness and not from the depth of his reasoning, has been compelled to invent a new theory of the autonomy, or self-designating power of ideas in the mind; independently either of association, relative suggestion, or unavoidable linking of ideas, according to Locke, Browne, Mill, and others, to explain the phenomenon which every one has experienced within himself; of the breaking forth within the mind of long trains of thought, which cannot be traced to any previously existing ideas. These things can only be explained by the metaphysics of Scripture, which solve the phenomena of mind by assuring us of the distinction between our merely present mental powers; and those mental powers, which shall live when the body is dead; and the connexion of both these powers with influences deducible from another state of existence. Metaphysics, therefore, as they have been hitherto studied, have contributed but little to the real progress of the human race as a spiritual and immortal species. This has only been done, and can only be done, by a gradually developed revelation; and the improvement made of that revelation by the persons to whom it is imparted.

\* This has been amply proved by Gale in his *Court of the Gentiles*; by Faber, in his *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*; Harecourt on the *Deluge*; Bryant, &c.

must contain many things which reason could not have discovered, which refer to another state of existence, and which are at the same time compatible with all other known truths. He would consequently make, and adhere to, the celebrated distinction between the conclusions which are according to the discoveries which his own reason can make—such as, that cause precedes effect; conclusions which his reason could never discover, and which are, therefore, above and beyond his own unaided powers—such as, that doctrine which is the great mystery of mysteries, the sum and substance, the one truth of revelation round which all the rest rally, and without which the Christian revelation is totally unintelligible, the doctrine of the divine Atonement as the only means of peace of the spirit before the Deity;—and conclusions which cannot be true, and therefore cannot be found in revelation, because they are contrary to those other conclusions which are undeniably true. He will make these distinctions, and then examine the evidences for the truth of revelation. When he has done this, he will ascertain the information which revelation conveys to him. If he find many things which are above his reason, he will remember that revelation would never have been granted if reason had been a sufficient guide; and he will consider that the submission of reason to revelation is a part of the moral probation of man. Such then is the province of reason in matters of religion. It must know its own weakness; believe in the necessity of a revelation; acknowledge the principal objects for which a revelation is required; study the evidences which prove what is revelation, and what is not; and then embrace the discoveries of that revelation as the only guide to the mental, moral, spiritual, and immortal instruction essential to continued happiness; beginning in the present, and going on to another state of existence. Reason, thus enlightened and directed, will welcome the volume of the Christian Scriptures as the only revelation. This is the record which combines all the requisites of a revelation. This contains all things necessary to that union of present and future felicity, which constitutes what the Christian means by salvation. This Scripture is my rule of belief, because I find no other rule whatever. The inferences which Christians have collected from these Scriptures, and which they have embodied in their

creeds and articles of faith, are only the conclusions to which they, in the exercise of their reason, employed in interpreting the Scripture, have already arrived before me. It is probable that they, I, or the inquirer into the truth of revelation, shall arrive at the same conclusions, and embrace, therefore, the same creeds and articles; but before I receive any interpretation whatever from the uninspired teacher, I demand this preliminary to be granted to me, that I do not receive the uninspired with the same reverence as the inspired. I draw the distinction between the revelation from heaven and the interpretations of men, as strongly as possible. I place my reason between the two. To revelation my reason submits implicitly, as my bounden duty and best privilege. To the conclusions, the decisions, the decrees, the creeds, the inferences of men, who are uninspired, my reason never submits in the same manner; it only conforms and acquiesces on different principles. It is my privilege to belong to a Christian society whose inferences from revelation I approve; but I belong to them because of my approbation, not because of their authority. While I maintain the absolute supremacy, divinity, and infallibility of Scripture, I place that reason next to the Scripture, which has already led me, by the blessing of the God of reason upon me, to welcome its revelations from my Creator as my first and greatest good. I continue my reason when I employ its powers in the endeavour to discover the meaning of revelation, in that same office only in which I had previously placed it; when I employed it to discover the necessity and the evidences of revelation. I will call in the assistance of every collateral aid in my power to enlighten my reason. I will pray for illumination from above as the foundation of all that sincerity which shall "chase each partial purpose from my breast." I will study with the Romanist the value of Church authority. I will explore with the scholar the treasures of criticism, the records of antiquity, the testimony of the fathers, and the opinions of modern theologians. Tradition shall be weighed and examined; its evidences shall be received, its legends rejected. I will pay respect, and homage, and deference to every teacher who would persuade me, with seriousness and earnestness, to consider an opinion, a comment, or an interpretation. If I can discover an uniform, concurrent stream of testimony from the

earlier ages when inspiration ceased, and non-inspiration was appointed to direct the Church, I will esteem such testimony as next in value to Scripture itself; and if I am compelled to reject the interpretation it submits to me, I will do so with sorrow and reluctance. But while I learn from all, and value all, I will submit my reason to none of them, as I submit it to the inspired revelation. I demand the much abused, much derided, and much ridiculed privilege of the unlimited right of private judgment; that is, of the right and power, uncontrolled by any human uninspired authority whatever, of exercising, as an individual responsible to God alone, the principles of reasoning on all religious matters; and arriving at conclusions which I believe to be supported by evidence. I place reason where it ought ever to be found—on its proper throne, at the right hand of revelation. I maintain its inferiority to the Scripture; its submission, in all cases, to the authority of evidence; and its equality with all which, like itself, is uninspired. Bold as this assumption is, it is the only true mode of reconciling all discrepancies. It maintains the supremacy of Scripture, it asserts the value of reason, it guides the enquirer after truth to that Christian society, or Church, which shall be found worthy of its homage by authority appealing to evidence; while it rejects, with abhorrence and contempt, that Christian society which scorns the appeal to evidence, and endeavours to rule the conscience and the reason by an arbitrary, unscriptural, irrational authority<sup>4</sup>. This, this alone, is the true way to destroy the

<sup>4</sup> "Most men try to dispense with one or other of these Divine informants; and for this reason, because it is difficult to combine them. The lights they furnish, coming from various quarters, cast separate shadows, and partially intercept each other; and it is pleasanter to walk without doubt and without shade, than to have to choose what is best and safest. The Romanists would simplify matters by removing reason, Scripture, and antiquity, and depending mainly on Church authority. The Calvinist relies on reason, criticism, and Scripture, to the disparagement of the moral sense, the Church, tradition, and antiquity. The latitudinarian relies on reason, with Scripture in subordination; the mystic, on the feelings and affections, or

what is commonly called, the heart. The politician takes the national faith as sufficient, and cares for little else. The man of the world acts by common sense, which is the oracle of the careless. The popular religionist considers the authorized version of Scripture to be all in all; but the true Catholic Christian is he who takes what God has given him, be it greater or less; despises not the lesser because he has received the greater, yet puts it not before the greater, but uses all duly, and to God's glory." Newman's Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church, viewed relatively to Romanism and popular Protestantism. Lect. v. On the use of private judgment, p. 158.

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principle which we call Popery, at its very root and foundation. Popery is not confined, as many persons imagine, to the Church of Rome. It flourishes more rankly there, and it derives its title from the Bishop of that Church; but Popery is the dominion of authority over conscience, appealing to power to coerce, instead of appealing to evidence to persuade. It has been found among all Churches, sects, and parties, though it is now retained by one alone. I must die alone. No priest, no Church can go with me into the invisible state. Before I die, that mental and spiritual character must be formed within me which will be immortal, as my soul is immortal. My reason is one component part of that character. It cannot die if the soul cannot die. It goes thither with me. The principal guide which the Almighty, before whom I must appear, has granted to my reason, is that revelation which proceeded from the unseen state into which I go. I will be directed, therefore, only by that guide and rule which is infallible in its declarations; accessible to the meanest by its simplicity; plain in its chief instructions; perfect, as containing all the knowledge of my happiness and duty which my reason can discover that the Almighty will require. Other spiritual aids may help me in comprehending its instructions. The Church may assist me. The priest may be my fellow-helper. The Apostles' creed, or the Nicene creed, may be the standard of the conclusions which I may adopt in common with my brethren; but the volume of revelation alone, the inspired communication from the Creator, who made me immortal that I might live in a purer state than the present, shall be my rule of faith, the only dependance on which my reason leans in its present weakness, and in its prospects of eternity. That alone, which has God for its author, truth for its matter, and salvation for its end, is the guide which my reason adopts as its rule in life, its support in death, and the germ of its improvement through its immortality; and reason then only assumes its right influence on the mind when it has thus enquired into the evidence, and thus submitted to the authority, of authentic and inspired revelation <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> It has lately become the fashion to deery these conclusions as popular Protestantism. I have much aversion to

the mere term Protestant, without some addition, because every sneering Infidel, who lifts his heel against the com-

mon faith, calls himself by that name. If, however, the testimony of the best and wisest of all ages be worthy of consideration, I could produce a list of names from the Fathers, the Romanists, the Reformers, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, and others, which would uphold to the utmost the justice of these remarks. The subject must be familiar to all. I subjoin only some of the principal evidences from the Reformers and eminent theologians of the English Church, who declare, in express terms, that the Scriptures are the rule of faith to the reason of man. I find them, to my hand, in an anonymous publication:—

CRANMER, in the *Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*, title i. c. 6.

RIDLEY, in his *Life*, by Ridley; London, 1763, p. 469.

BISHOP JEWEL, *Treatise of Holy Scripture*, p. 34. Among many others in his *Apology*, this may be mentioned, c. ix. div. i. p. 195. Works, London, 1616.

RAINOLD, in his *Conference with Hart*, London, 1598, insists that "Scripture is the only rule of faith."

WHITAKER, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, speaks decidedly to the same purpose. See his *Collected Works*, at Geneva, 1610, t. i. p. 326; t. ii. p. 136, col. 1. And in many other places.

CRANKHORPE, in his *Defensio Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, Londini, 1625, cap. 14, sec. 3, p. 73.

MORTON, Bishop of Durham, in his *Catholic Appeal*, London, 1610, b. ii. c. xxv. throughout; especially sec. 13, p. 331.

DAVENANT, Bishop of Salisbury, and Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, in his *Prælectiones*, Cantabrigiæ, 1631, among other places, p. 40. In his *Expositio Epist. ad Colossenses*, c. iv. v. 4, p. 384, Cantabr. 1639; or, in Mr. Allport's *Translation*, London, 1832, vol. ii. p. 248.

BISHOP HALL, in his *Old Religion*, chap. xvi. sect. 3.

ABP. USHER, in the *Articles of the Church of Ireland*, art. i. and vi. See Wilkins' *Concilia Magnæ Britannicæ*, tom. iv. p. 447; and Parr's *Life of Usher*, p. 14, London, 1687.

ABP. LAUD, in his *Conference with Fisher*, London, 1686, p. 129, speaks of the Scripture as "the rule of faith," and "the same which the ancient Church of Christ admitted."

BP. MONTAGUE, in his *New Gag for an Old Goose*, London, 1624, p. 13, says, "The written word is the rule of faith with us; and hath been so with all our fathers of old."

COSIN, Bp. of Durham, in his Latin treatise of *The Catholic Religion of the kingdom of England*, London, 1707, p. 31, in his life by Smith, follows Bishop Jewel, as already quoted from his *Apology*; not to mention his other works.

BARLOW, Bp. of Lincoln, in his *Few Plain Reasons*, London, 1688, pp. 32—34, agrees with the foregoing authorities.

LOYD, Bp. of Worcester, in his *Seasonable Discourse*, London, 1673, p. 2, observes, "This Christian Church, our holy mother, has no other rule of faith and practice than the Holy Scripture;" and for his proof refers to the sixth Article of our Church.

BURNET, Bp. of Salisbury, in the first part of his *Exposition of the sixth Article*, says, "The Scriptures are a complete rule of faith;" and in the Introduction, that "all the Churches which separated from the Roman communion, published the confessions of their faith;" which include the Articles of the Church of England.

BP. STILLINGFLEET, in his collected works, printed London, 1710, &c., every where speaks of the Scriptures as the rule of faith. In his first volume, p. 183, he speaks of St. Paul appealing to "the law and the prophets," as the ground and rule of his faith. In p. 401 he says, that "the writings of the Apostles were intended by the Holy Ghost to be a *standing rule*, whereby the Church was to judge which was the true and genuine doctrine of Christ." In p. 406, the Scriptures are said to be "an infallible written rule" for "*us*." In vol. iv. p. 201, this is repeated. In vol. vi., to select from a variety of passages, p. 199, he inquires, Whether Scripture be a rule of faith to us or not? His answer is, "Certainly; all that believe it to be the word of God must take it for a rule of faith." In p. 388, Stillingfleet cites the words of the sixth Article of our Church, and then inquires, "Have they (the people of the Church of England) then, any other rule of faith which they rely upon?" In p. 717, the Bishop insists, "We own Scripture for our rule, and for our complete and adequate rule of faith." In p. 743, in replying to an objector, Stillingfleet observes,

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"One would think that he had never read the Articles of the Church of England ; for *there* he might have seen that *the Scripture is made the rule and ground of our faith.*"

I pass over others which might be quoted from the writings of STRATFORD, Bishop of Chester ; FOWLER, Bishop of Gloucester ; GROVE, Bishop of Chichester ; KIDDER, Bishop of Bath and Wells ; WILLIAMS, Bishop of Chichester, contained in Bishop Gibson's Collection of Tracts, entitled, *A preservative against Popery*. If, however, we do examine them, we shall find, that not only the ancient Church, but the Church of England also, as Dr. Hansard, Dean of Windsor, observes, (Gibson, *ibid.* vol. i. title 1, p. 217,) "follows (for) her rule the Holy Scriptures."

I add the names of several of the Archbishops of Canterbury, who were either contemporaries of, or followed shortly after, the foregoing writers. Dr. Tennison, one of these, in his *Discourse concerning a Guide in matters of Faith* (Gibson, *ibid.* title 4, p. 17), says, "Though ecclesiastical authority be a help to our faith, yet the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of it."

TILLOTSON, Archbishop of Canterbury, published a particular treatise on the *Rule of Faith*, where, in part iv. sect. 3, p. 36, London, 1676, speaking of Christ's doctrine, so that it might be a *fixed and*

*standing rule of faith and manners* to the end of the world, he adds, "To this end the providence of God took care to have it committed to writing." And in part iv. sect. 2, pp. 320—331, he gives many passages from the principal writers of the ancient Church, particularly from p. 326, &c., to prove "that Scripture is the rule of faith."

WAKE, also Archbishop of Canterbury, *speaks to the point* upon this important subject. His *Second Defence of the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England*, contained in Gibson, *ibid.* vol. iii. title 9, pp. 156, 157, insists "that *the Holy Scripture is the only perfect and sufficient rule of faith.*" This is, in effect, the common belief of all Protestants whatsoever, as appears by their several confessions, and might easily be shown out of the writings of our *first Reformers*, and the most eminent of those who have lived since, and built their faith upon the same foundation."

BISHOP TOMLINE tells us, while "*the written word of God is the sole rule of our faith and practice,*" at the same time the *Articles of our Church*, in themselves, form not *the rule, but the confession of our faith*. This is common to the Reformed Churches, as is observed by the same writer in the Introduction to his Exposition, wherein, as elsewhere, he follows Bishop Burnet.

## SECTION III.

*On the Nature and Limits of the Influence of the Ecclesiastical Power.*

BUT is not this, it will be said, proving too much? If revelation be our only guide, and reason its only attendant, in the effort of conscience to attain, and in the effort of the understanding to arrive, at the knowledge of truth; are we to regard the human race as a collection of isolated individuals, seeking truth as an abstract principle, without reference to the society in which they live? Is there to be no check, no control to the decisions of the enquirer? Are there none to whom he is to pay deference? Is no authority to be placed over the mind but the conclusions of unassisted reason? Are there no cases of doubt, difficulty, error, or weakness of judgment, which require other aid than the deliberations of the individual, how anxious soever he may be to please God? Is no submission due to ancient or universal determinations of painful controversies? If God is to be worshipped, must the worshipper kneel in the wilderness?—To all such questions the answer is easy. We are compelled, for the better understanding of the subject, to consider the human being as an individual only, and to speak, therefore, of the right of private judgment: whereas, if we interpret the words private judgment to signify private caprice; no such right exists. If there is a God who is a law-giver to his creatures, and if man be immortal, he is required to obey the laws of his Creator, and to secure the best interests of his immortality. We affirm only that there is an inherent, primary obligation on man as an individual, to seek and to obtain the inward conviction, or satisfaction, for himself; that the manner in which he is called upon, either by the laws, customs, opinions, or authority of those around him, to please God, and to secure his permanent happiness, is such as God requires; and such as will accomplish, most efficiently and certainly, the great object before him. In seeking this knowledge, we cannot but confess that reason has too often perverted its powers, and the unlimited use of

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reason has consequently been decried on this account. Nothing has so much injured the cause of revelation, and the happiness of societies and Churches, as the caprice of reason. The sound reasoner is the reconciler of truths. He will study to show in what manner all propositions, which are undoubtedly correct in their abstract forms, may be made to harmonize, and not to clash with each other. While we attribute, therefore, to human reason the power to discover its own weakness, to ascertain the probability of a revelation, to study evidence, to examine authority, and to arrive at conclusions, I am defending its liberty, but not its caprice; I plead for its privileges, but not its presumption; for its use, not its abuse. We must assume that it is sincere and reverential; humble and teachable; unbiassed by the decisions which are too often formed without sufficient examination, which we justly call prejudices; and uncorrupted by base and unworthy motives. Reason in this state will be guided by evidence alone, and will unavoidably and consequently embrace revelation.

Let us, then, enquire what place will be assigned to the next great influence over the human mind, namely, that of ecclesiastical authority. On our rightly understanding this matter, the whole question of persecutions may be said in some measure to depend. We will consider the point on the principles of natural reason, taking for granted only that the New Testament is believed, and that the reader thinks freely, and is anxious only to discover truth and union.

If one individual, exercising his reason, becomes convinced by evidence that revelation is true, and that, after he is satisfied with the evidences of its truth, he proves his wisdom by submitting to its authority; we may justly believe that other individuals would arrive also at the same conclusions. There would then be a certain number of persons thinking the same things, pursuing the same ends, loving the same God, and obeying the same principles as their laws. Their common agreement in these common objects would form a bond of union; union would produce friendships, conversation, and society; the increase of their numbers would cause other societies; wherever men are formed into societies, there must be laws for their government; laws, unless when

they are imposed by violence, and are thus expressive merely of the will of a conqueror, must be derived from, and suited to, the objects, nature, and constitution of the society for whose use they were formed. To understand, therefore, the laws which probably would preserve in one society the *believers in revelation, upon evidence*, we must consider the *object*, the *nature*, and the *constitution* of the earliest assemblages which they would form among themselves. Their *object* would be to uphold the system or aggregate of the truth which they received; to preserve union on the foundation of sufficient discipline; and to maintain the purity and holiness, which was the end of all revelation. The *nature* of the society would be, that none should be admitted among its members but those who were thus fully convinced of the importance and value of truth, union, and holiness. The *constitution* of the society would be remarkable in this respect. It would be different from every society of a worldly and political nature, as to its founders and first directors. All societies, merely human, are supposed to consist of classes, or companies; among which, one or more persons are permitted, on account of birth, force, or choice, to represent the general interests, or to direct the community. The impartation of revelation implies the authority of the channels, or persons selected to communicate it to mankind; and the earliest society, therefore, which was formed on the principle of receiving truth from other sources than their own discoveries, would consist of two classes, the teachers and the taught; the teachers preceding, and, therefore, not elected by the taught. The *first* teachers of the Christian revelation would be those who had held communion with Him, Whose actions, conversation, and sufferings, demonstrated, (in the fulfilment of innumerable prophecies, handed down in the preceding parts of revelation,) that He was the desire of all nations. He would commission a certain number of persons to instruct their brethren. The earliest society would, therefore, be coeval with the continued giving of revelation, which began with Christ, and ended with the last of the inspired Apostles. Its teachers would be the dispensers of the knowledge, which was still being imparted from a Divine source. The society, at the first, would consist of these three divisions: the Divine ordainer, the teachers ordained, and the people to be in-

structed. As the revelation was still progressing, and was not completed, the authority of the first ordained teachers would partake of the nature of the authority of the great ordainer; and the earliest believers in the revelation would submit to their directions as infallible, supreme, and Divine.

The *second* generation of the society would arrive. "The Messiah would have been removed. The objects and nature of the society remain the same. The members of the society increase. The first teachers who have been invested with power to select others, choose, from the first fruits of the converts, faithful men to perpetuate the framework, and to continue the great objects of the society, which now consists of three classes, namely, of the inspired ordainers, the ordained, and the general mass of zealous converts. In this generation the revelation from heaven is not completed. The authority, therefore, of the first dispensers of the still progressing revelation remains undiminished. Truth would be enlarged by their doctrines. Union would be strengthened by their institutions. Holiness would be increased by their example and general instructions.

The *third* generation of the society arrives. The revelation from heaven is at length completed by the survivor of the former generation, who connects by his long life the third with the second; and who is the last of those who were commissioned by the Messiah Himself. The cessation of revelation finds the early societies of Christians possessed of a completed Scripture, in which all truth had been given which was essential, or rather indispensable, to man; possessed also of a form of government, adopted from its first founders, but with uninspired teachers, whose peculiar duty was to interpret the past-given revelation, and not to impart any new doctrines. The discipline of the first form of government, we may believe, would not be infringed upon in this generation. The remembrance of the first founders, their words, example, and ordering of the society, would prevent the Christians from welcoming any rash infringements upon the system of discipline imposed by the inspired teachers. The authority, therefore, of the ordained teachers of this third generation would arise from their adherence to the doctrines, and to the already established discipline of their predecessors; from their commission to teach, granted by those who were inspired; and from their

exemplariness, usefulness, fitness, and zeal. It would not, however, be an authority, which was infallible, supreme, and divine. BOOK I.  
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The *fourth* generation of the earlier Christian societies, possessing the now completed revelation, which would be the guide to all, would consist of these three classes: the ordainers, who would retain by prescription the authority to appoint; teachers, who instructed the people, but who were not fully invested with the right to ordain; and the people, who were anxious to maintain the three objects of the society, truth, union, and holiness. Though the infallible authority of inspiration was withdrawn from this generation, veneration for their office, attachment to their persons, submission to their instruction, and the dread of intruding into holy things without the sanction of the successors of their first ordainers, would long continue. The necessity of instruction would remain with the people, the necessity of teachers would be the same, and the necessity of judges to decide on the qualification of the teachers, and to grant them authority to teach, would be the same also.

The result of all this would be, that the laws which would be required to govern such societies would be enacted with reference to the three great divisions of the community, and to the design they all profess to have in view. They would aim at upholding in its purity the knowledge they all profess to value. They would gradually define the powers of the teachers. They would preserve the authority of the ordainers. But the laws which would be necessary to accomplish these objects would proceed from three sources. The *first* would be from the same Divine origin which commanded the ordainers, who were the companions of the Messiah, to commit the power of teaching to faithful men. The *second* would be the circumstances, controversies, and events which would characterize the early societies; and which would be remembered as precedents, cautions, warnings, or precepts, which would be more or less applicable to subsequent societies. The *third* would be the customs, conclusions, and adoptions, from the surrounding communities, of maxims, and forms, and modes, which would constitute a mass of "gold and pearls, shells and sea-weed;" and become, in after-ages, venerated by some, despised by others, and of question-

able utility to more. The *first* source of the laws of the Church, in other words, would be Divine. It would be the offspring of the first, or apostolic age. It would be revealed in Scripture. It would form a part of the general revelation, and, like all the preceding portions of that Divine dispensation, it would have "God for its author, truth for its matter, and salvation for its end." It could not be rejected without danger; it could not be questioned without folly.

The *second* source of the laws of the Church would be partly Divine, and partly human. It would proceed from the societies which would be formed after, or at the death of the companions of the Messiah. It would embrace the precepts and discipline of the teaching which would follow the termination of revelation. It would be entitled to the respect and attention of subsequent ages, as the best illustrator of difficulties, and the best guide of reason to conclusions in controversies.

The *third* source of the laws of the Church would be that which was more immediately human. It would arise from the medley of customs and practices, which would be partly useful, partly useless, partly wise, and partly unwise. It would be questioned, admired, or condemned, in the ages that followed, according to the manner in which they opposed or favoured the persons who might appeal to such authority in controversies of an after date.

All these laws, from whatever source they might be derived, would be resolvable into three divisions. The first would refer to discipline; the second to the doctrine of the Churches; the third to both. The *first* would be, that no person should be permitted to teach in the name of a Church, unless the Church grant him authority to do so. This authority must be confirmed by the persons to whom power to judge of the fitness of the candidate for the office of instructor, to keep up the knowledge which is essential to present and future happiness, has been already imparted; and these, if it be possible, ought to have had that power granted to them by those who obtained it from the original ordainers, who were the founders of the Churches; and who derived their authority to ordain from the Messiah, and not from the people. The *second* is, that no truth can be received as undeniably entitled to the homage and submission of reason, unless it be derived from a Divine source, or deduced from

revelation. The *third* is, that in all cases where controversies may arise, the testimony of the traditions, which are found to have existed "*always, every where, among all Christians,*" is to be regarded as so probably true, that it ought to be received, unless sound criticism, or the express declaration of revelation affirm and demonstrate its error. If reason is governed by these laws, there will be no room for presumption or caprice.

I have described, in some measure, the case of the earliest converts to Christianity. These holy persons did not think that the religion deduced from revelation, and approved by their reason, consisted only in the homage of the heart of the individual man to his Creator, without reference to their fellow-men. Christianity with them was social in its love to man, as well as devout in its love to God, or spiritual in its love to the soul; or in its encouragement of the best self-love, the love of holiness, as the secret and only source of happiness. The Christians were not like the sects of philosophers, seeking out those only who should agree with them in speculative opinion. They were anxious to form societies which should be bound by mutual affection and a common faith; and, therefore, who should worship together. They became united into Churches. These Churches increased in numbers, till the whole extent of the Roman empire became crowded with Christian individuals, and with Christian societies. All these were ever anxious to preserve their primitive union. They abhorred the thought of separating one from the other. In proportion to the very zeal which made the Christians anxious to maintain union, was their desire to agree in opinion, and to observe an uniform discipline. In the primitive Churches, indeed, there was little disagreement respecting discipline. The chief controversies regarded doctrines. Those whose conclusions were not approved were called heretics, and their opinions heresies. They were looked upon with suspicion as disturbers of the general tranquillity; and if their differences with their brethren were very great, they were not considered as belonging to the number of the faithful. With regard to discipline, however, the case was very different. Very little discussion took place respecting it. The first controversy concerning it was begun by Novatian<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> See Euseb. H. E. vi. 33; and Mosheim, de rebus Christ. ante Const. Mag. p. 503.

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who refused to admit into communion certain more notorious offenders upon their repentance and prayers; a fact which implies the general knowledge of, and strict adherence to, well known enactments in the early Churches. Though there was but little or no disagreement, however, among the pristine societies on this subject, it was impossible but that many difficulties would arise, and many regulations would therefore be made respecting those ordinances which were necessary to peace and order. The consequence was, that superiors were consulted; decrees were made; synods were summoned in dioceses, districts, and provinces; and councils or larger synods were assembled, at which all the influential superiors of the several Christian communions were invited to meet and deliberate. When a powerful but erring ecclesiastic, as in the instance of Paul<sup>2</sup> of Samosata, refused obedience to the decisions of his brethren, appeal was made to the civil power to enforce the decree of the synod. The Churches had two objects in view, truth and peace. Truth with them was the right opinion; or the right estimate of reality<sup>3</sup>. Peace or happiness with them was repose, founded upon the conviction of truth, and obedience to its discoveries and directions. To obtain truth, reason consulted every source of information. To obtain happiness, it sought for social, not for solitary good. In its attempt to seek for both, it looked for the testimony of those with whom it might hold communion on some common foundation of agreement in opinion and conclusion. The results of their endeavours to form societies which should accomplish those objects have been, that catholic or primitive antiquity has handed down to us a large mass of observances or canons for the government of Christian societies; some of which may be fairly deduced, and have ever, for fifteen centuries, and by the great majority of Christians, both before and after the event called the Reformation (when the great effort was made in England to remove some influential principles which were

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. H. E. vii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> This definition of truth is given by Plato—*ἀλήθεια ἐστὶν ἡ ἀμθὴ δόξη τοῦ ὄντος*. Truth is the right opinion of that which exists. I have no doubt that our term orthodox is derived from this very definition, which is much

clearer than that of Locke; that truth is nothing but the joining and separating of signs, as the things signified do agree, or disagree one with another. But see the chapter on Truth. Essay, book iv. chap. v. sec. 1, &c.

not taught in their more ancient societies), been deduced from revelation, and others from the conviction of their usefulness. BOOK I.  
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The early history of the Church then may be divided into these three portions; *First*, the apostolic age, when revelation alone was the director of the Christian societies. *Secondly*, the age which elapsed from the closing of the canon on the death of St. John, to the end of the fourth general council. *Thirdly*, the age from the time of Justinian, in whose reign the fourth general council was held, to the period when the sitting of the council of Trent terminated; and when no further novelties were introduced into the Church on the plea of the union of Scripture, tradition, or Catholic universal antiquity<sup>4</sup>. Ecclesiastical power exists among us. The only question then is, what part of that ecclesiastical power is deducible from revelation, and ought, therefore, if we are convinced of this fact, to have an immoveable and permanent influence over us? Also, what are those observances which possess only that authority over us which may be possibly wise and useful in practice; but which, being human only in their origin, may be altered, removed, rescinded, or enlarged, as wisdom, reason, or expediency, in its right sense, may deem to be advisable? The question refers only to discipline. Is there, or is there not, a principle of ecclesiastical government or regulation which is commanded by the Author and Giver of a divine revelation? which was uniformly, or generally, adopted by the founders of the first societies during the completion, and after the completion, of that revelation? which is of universal utility, because it is applicable to all forms of civil government? which is traceable to remote antiquity, as a practice in society, as well as a precept, or regulation, which commends itself to our reason by its accom-

<sup>4</sup> Since that period, however, there have been introduced the worship of the sacred heart of Jesus into France, and other strangenesses. But this originated in the alleged disappearance of a pestilence which desolated that country in the year 1720, as soon as the Bishop of Provence, the magistrates and citizens of Marseilles, Arles, Aix, and Toulon, dedicated themselves by a solemn oath to the worship of the sacred heart of Jesus. See the Bishop of

Boulogne's Pastoral Letter to the Faithful, and the Extract from the General Assembly of the Clergy of France, held at Paris, July 17th, 1765, as published in the "Devotion of the Office of the Sacred Heart." Keating and Browne, London, 1821.

This worship is not derived from Scripture, nor defended by tradition, nor derived from antiquity; though Pope Pius VII. commended it to the English.

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plishing the three great objects of all ecclesiastical discipline, the preservation of truth ; the maintenance of peace ; and the upholding of union ? If there shall be found such a principle of regulation, it must claim our adherence. The only caution we must observe is, to judge of it independently of all subsequent corruptions from ambition ; of all rejections from a supposed necessity, which may be done away ; or from any arbitrary caprice on the part of those who resolve to abuse the power of deciding upon evidence. If such a principle of ecclesiastical regulation can be discovered, it is entitled to our acceptance and homage. It is as obligatory upon conscience, and as authoritative in its power, as any other precept which is given to us to promote the happiness and virtue of mankind.

That such a principle of obligation, as the better guide to our reason and the foundation of ecclesiastical power, exists, and fulfils all the above conditions, appears to me to be evidently deducible from revelation, history, antiquity, and universality of adoption. It may be expressed in the words I have mentioned—whatever be the private instruction that friend may impart to friend, as a proof of zeal or friendship, careful of his welfare ; no man is to be permitted to teach in the name of a Church, or of a society, unless that Church or society has granted him the power to do so. This power must be conferred by those who have received authority for that purpose. This ecclesiastical power exists among ourselves. The double description of teachers, the two classes of ordainers and ordained are continued ; a double provision, therefore, has been made for the preservation of truth or knowledge, which is the best inheritance of the people ; and it will, I think, eventually be found, that this double provision will be the best means of remedying all the evils which have resulted to the Churches, either from ambition or encroachment on the part of the teacher ; or from ignorance or supineness on the part of the people. Among us the original description of teachers who possessed the authority to ordain others before the Churches were formed, have handed down a power which was not common to both classes of teachers, but which was confined to themselves—the power of committing to others, at the request of the people, or, at their own conviction of the wants of the people, the authority to teach in

the name of the society. The people, having the completed revelation granted to them by their earliest teachers, are enabled to judge whether the ordained instructor accomplishes the object he professes to have in view, the preservation of truth and union. He who is set apart by the Church to speak in the name of the Church, is the person who has authority from those teachers who have been elected by a power, originally granted from a higher source than that of the people to confer authority. He professes to teach that only which revelation and reason affirm. He gives proof to the people by the decision of his ordainers, that he is qualified to teach. He declares that nothing shall be taught by him which is incompatible with the truths originally given from the mouths of the first teachers, and contained in revelation; and the people to whom that revelation was given, and for whose service both the ministry was instituted, and revelation imparted, being themselves entrusted with that completed revelation; acquiesce in the choice, and judge for themselves whether the ordained teacher instructs them according to the right interpretation afforded them by antiquity and reason, criticism and devotion.

Such is the first part of ecclesiastical power. Revelation expressly declares what the nature of all society and the dictates of natural reason demand, that none should speak in the name of the Church unless the Church grant them authority to do so. The power deciding who those persons shall be to whom authority to speak in the name of the Church shall be given, is committed to the Church at large; but it is exercised for its benefit by instructors whose power is superior to that, of those who are not expressly set apart for this one purpose only; because that power was Divine in its origin, as the power of a parent may be said to be; and is not, therefore, wholly dependent on the decisions of the people. The teacher is the independent preserver of truth and union, because, while he holds the same revelation in his hands which they possess, he retains the authority of the commissioned interpreter. The people, too, are the independent preservers of truth and union, because they, also, have the standard to which they may appeal to judge of the exercise of the power of their teacher. The authority of the Church over the conscience of its members is not that of the teach-

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ers and their ordainers only. It is the joint authority of the whole society, and of the revelation by which it is governed. It is the authority, of the threefold power, of the people, of the Scripture, and of its authorized and well qualified interpreters. This part of its authority ought to be binding on the conscience of the members of every Church which is founded on such principles, and aims at peace and truth. In other words, the enquirer who receives revelation, and uses his own reason, is directed in the interpretation of that revelation, and in the right use of his reason, by an educated, ordained, and authorized priesthood; and by the conclusions at which that priesthood, together with the Church, or laity, arrived in the earliest ages. He will not capriciously reject the instruction of the one, nor the uniform belief of the other. He must have overwhelming reasons for his conviction, if he believes them to be wrong. He will consider all the conclusions of the ancient societies of Christians with candour and deep concern before he proceeds to reject any. The mere fact that they constituted the laws of the earliest societies, when these were composed of men who were willing to lay down their lives for a revelation which they had received upon evidence satisfactory to their reason, entitles them to his homage; till he is convinced that they ought to be rejected because they are either inconsistent with Divine truth, or that they are useless, burthensome, and unnecessary; and therefore are justly condemned.

As the question of Church authority, or the influence of ecclesiastical power, is one which has been, and will still be, frequently discussed: and as many opposite conclusions on the subject divide society at present, it may be well to consider in what manner an enquirer after truth will proceed to ascertain whether the views which are here taken are correct. He finds that many who affirm that the Scriptures are true, differ in the conclusions they draw from them, both as to doctrines and worship. Let us imagine, then, that the enquirer begins with the first difficulty. On what evidence, he demands, do you, who affirm that revelation is contained in the volume of Scripture, receive that volume? The answer must be (it is given by every individual who thinks at all on the matter), We receive it not only because the persons around us now believe it, and because their fathers received it,

but because it has been handed down from generation to generation, till we arrive at that period when it was given to the world by the inspiration under which it was written. My object of enquiry is twofold, says the enquirer; I seek for right inferences, in the midst of your disputes, on doctrines which I am to believe, and on the mode of worship which I am to practise. If God has given me revelation respecting my present happiness and my future immortality, it is probable He would have granted me some knowledge of the mode in which my mind shall be disciplined, and worship be offered; and as you differ on these two matters, I will act on the principles now laid down. I will refer to the inferences from revelation on these two points, which were drawn by those to whom revelation was originally given. I will consult the testimony of that age in which inspiration ceased, and uninspired teaching began. Whatever was uniformly received in that age by all believers in revelation, in every part of the world where it was welcomed<sup>5</sup>, I conclude to be more probably the right inference from revelation than any conclusions respecting either faith or worship which may be traced to a subsequent period. As the history of the battle of Waterloo will be believed, in every part of the world, two thousand years hence, upon the general handing down of the narrative from father to son, because it is now credited in the age in which it took place; so will I seek for truth in that age in which all, of every sect, name, and party, without any exception, inform me it may most certainly be found. If reason be, indeed, sincere, reverential, humble, and teachable, as we suppose it to be for the sake of our argument, this will be its course of proceeding. The enquirer will steadily resolve to be decided between the different inferences which he finds to be peculiar to the age in which he lives; by the testimony, the opinions, and the practices of those societies which first received the completed revelation; because they were convinced by its existing and undeniable evidences. In other words, the enquirer after truth will decide between the opposite opinions derived from the volume of Scripture by the

<sup>5</sup> This is merely the golden rule of Vincentius Lirinensis, in his *Commonitorium*, lately republished with a translation at Oxford—*Quod semper, quod*

*ubique, quod ab omnibus*. I only make its application plainer by uniting my enquirer to the age in which the completed revelation was imparted.

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best assistant to his reason next to Scripture; the testimony, the conclusions, and the conduct of catholic and primitive antiquity.

I see the bold and zealous, yet humble enquirer walk away from the mere men of the newspaper and pamphlets of the day in which he lives, to seek the witness of that antiquity in preference to the jarring declamations of the partizans of his age. He holds his course right onward through the mazes of the controversies of eighteen centuries, spurning the dissensions of his own time. He hears unmoved the contending epithets of orthodox or heterodox, liberal or bigot, high church or low church, alternately applied to him in ridicule, approbation, or reproach. All invite him to join their ranks, and to fight under their banners. All boast themselves to be the chief depositaries of truth. All appeal to Scripture, and declare themselves to be its wisest interpreters. He ascends to the centuries which immediately preceded the age in which he lives. He gazes astonished, though not bewildered, at the contests between the innumerable sects which swarmed upon, and since, the overthrow of episcopacy; and listens with amazement to the presbyterian refusing toleration to the independent<sup>6</sup>, after he had overthrown the mitre and the liturgy, because their admirers had punished the libellers of the hierarchy. He sees the origin of Presbyterianism among the apologies of Calvin, from the plea of a supposed necessity. He marks the rise of innumerable sects from interpretations of isolated texts unknown to antiquity, and unsupported by the very shadow of any knowledge of the original languages. He can neither adopt their creeds, nor follow their example. He proceeds downward still to other centuries. He marks the contests of that series of years which ended with the Council of Trent, and began with the preaching of Luther; and he is pained to the heart with the stern necessity of opposing the long-established domination of ecclesiastical

<sup>6</sup> One of the most instructive pages of our past history is the declamation of the Presbyterians in England in the time of the Commonwealth, after the overthrow of episcopacy against the toleration of independency. Toleration was called "a monstrous imagination," "soul murder," "the destruction of all

religion." It was ranked with indifference to all truth, and was condemned as the great sin which would call down the judgments of God upon the nation. See the Sermons of that time, by Case, Calamy, and others; also the quotations in Lathbury's History of the English Episcopacy, pp. 334—353.

despotism which required such a contest. He mourns over the obstinacy of the Church which refused alike compliance with the prayers of its friends, and the invectives of its enemies. He grieves at the vices and the crimes, the outrages and the follies, which disgraced one portion of the advocates of the reform of the Church; while he admires the zeal, the patience, and the piety, which adorned another. He wonders at the religious dissensions which followed the martyrs to their dungeons; employed the last thoughts of the victim at the stake; and made him more anxious to refute the arguments than to quench the fires of the persecutor. He sympathizes with the sufferer who pressed the English Prayer-Book to his breast in the flames, and thanked God for giving that book to his country; and he rejoices that the fair fabric of the Church of England arose so gracefully from the chaos of the preceding discord. Still he goes on. Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, in the centuries which preceded the preaching of Luther. The common priest could not interpret the Scripture, which he had sometimes neither seen, nor read. Learning was confined to the ambitious or curious ecclesiastic. The mass of the people, ignorant as their own horses, sometimes asked, at the instigation of a wandering Lollard, for the bread of life; and the authorized teacher of the land, the successor of the Apostles, the channel of the benefit of the sacraments, gave them the stone of the magnificent Church, the fragrant incense, the pompous procession, the splendid dress, and all the gorgeous ceremony of the laborious ritual of Rome, to gratify the senses and appease the conscience with the forms of outward worship; while the soul sighed, and reason wept in vain for a more heavenly and spiritual food. Penance supplied the place of repentance. Faith shuddered at an inevitable purgatory, and trembled at the poverty which could purchase no masses for its deliverance. Reason shrunk back from the penalty of a suspicion of heresy; and the very waters of life seem to have stagnated into the turbid pool of superstition, which gave forth the miasmata of an infectious death when they were unmoved by the breath of religious enquiry; or sent up their clouds of noxious insects to sting and torment the supposed heretic if they were agitated into motion. Shall the enquirer still go on to other centuries? Shall the primitive

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antiquity, of which he is in search, be found in the controversies of Tramontane and Ultramontane, in the disputes of the great schism, the subtleties of the scholastic divines, the clashing councils, the Papal decrees, the terrible inquisition, the sacrament of marriage, to be unpartaken by the priesthood, the dethronement of kings, the interdict by which nations could believe that the mercy of God was suspended to a Christian people, because the temporal prince had quarrelled with the Bishop of Rome? Is primitive antiquity to be found in the wicked despotism over the soul, which makes the intention of the priest essential to the mercy of God? or in the blasphemy which dares to insist upon the prodigious power to bring the Body of Christ down forth from his glory in heaven to the earth, invisibly to the senses, yet corporeally, and therefore subject to the senses of the sight and touch of his worshippers? Where shall the long catalogue of the “gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire,” which throng the blackness of the darkness of the past, and which call themselves the faith of primitive antiquity, terminate? Great, indeed, is the patience which the enquirer after truth, who believes in a revelation worthy of the God of reason, must exercise, as he thus traces back history, from the present to the past. From the time when Hildebrand sate on his Papal throne, and surveyed, with unruffled aspect, the tortures he commanded to be inflicted on the sufferers who had offended him; throughout the gradual usurpation of the temporal authority by the Bishops of Rome, till the era when Justinian decreed that all who believed the Nicene Creed should be called Catholic, and all subjects of the empire should be called Roman,—and thus originated the present epithet which now exclusively distinguishes the Italian Church and its disciples,—to the contests between the adherents of the truth and error of the earlier councils, which were assembled with better objects than to promote the ambition of the Papal see; all is sad and painful to the disinterested spectator of the records of ecclesiastical history. It was necessary that the Church of Christ should thus travel in the wilderness; but the enquirer seeks in vain for that oasis in the desert on which his eye may repose, and his feet may rest with pleasure. The days of Constantine are near. The persecutions in favour of paganism are ended. The light begins at length to

dawn, and the eye of reason surveys the promised land, where some criterion of truth may be found to direct the wanderer among the clashing inferences from revelation. We arrive at that majestic edifice of catholic and primitive antiquity in which the instructions of the inspired teacher ends, and those of the non-inspired begin; when the actions of its adherents are at once the best interpreters of revelation, and the precedents for the conduct of all Churches or societies of Christians in all succeeding generations.

Arrived at this period of the history of the past, the enquirer for truth will observe that the Roman empire, at the accession of Constantine, was crowded with societies of Christians, who maintained, amidst all the clashing opinions on certain points of doctrine; one uniform system of ecclesiastical discipline, similar in its plan and order to that which now prevails in the several episcopal Churches. Synods, it is true, were held more frequently, for the Church was not then dependent upon the civil power for the enforcement of her directions and decrees; and the persons to whom was committed the power of ordaining, were not accustomed to act, as if they were invested with authority, wholly independent of their brethren and the people. There were, however, three several divisions of teachers; the first, those who instructed and possessed the power (in conjunction with their brethren, but who, without them, had not the same power,) of ordaining teachers. The second, that of teachers, who had no right of themselves to appoint others. The third, that of ministers, or assistants to the two former<sup>7</sup>. The same polity is traceable back till we arrive at the generation immediately following the death of St. John, the contemporary of the founder of the completed stage of the one great revelation.

Before the death of the last of the Apostles, seventy, appointed by the Saviour of the world, were endued with powers to perform, at certain times, according as the interests

<sup>7</sup> On this point of Church government, Giesler says:—"The inferior clergy, it is true, were appointed solely by the Bishop; but the choice of a presbyter must be approved by the people. In discharge of his duties, too, the Bishop must not only consult his presbyters, but in certain cases must

bring questions before the whole Church."

See, in confirmation of these opinions, Cyprian, Ep. xxxiii. and lxxv. Also, Cons. Carthag. Gen. IV. A.D. 398, can. 23. (Mansii, iii. p. 953.) Also, Cornelii Epist. ad Fabian (ap. Euseb. vi. 43. 7), and Cyprian, Ep. v. ad Presbyt. et Diac.

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of the religion they were to enforce appeared to them to require it, actions which were more than human. These powers are generally called the miraculous gifts<sup>8</sup>. They were not only possessed by the Apostles, but they were imparted by them to others. There is some deficiency in the evidence respecting the time of the duration of these powers in the Church. Dr. Middleton attacked the common opinion, and that successfully. Dr. Burton, the most sober writer on ecclesiastical history of modern times, concludes, "that there must have been many persons alive at the death of St. John who possessed the miraculous powers which had been granted to them by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles; and that miracles did not cease suddenly and abruptly with the last of the Apostles, but were still exerted occasionally for the benefit of the Church till God thought fit to withdraw them altogether<sup>9</sup>." Before the death of the last of the Apostles, seven Churches were established in Asia. Churches were formed, also, in Rome, Corinth, Antioch, Philippi, Jerusalem, and other places. The chief of these Churches were founded by St. Paul; that of Jerusalem by the other Apostles. Let us examine the manner in which St. Paul proceeded, and then the testimony of the author of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, respecting the government of the Church at Jerusalem.

It has pleased God at all times to select the most proper instrument for the accomplishment of his purposes. When the time had arrived that the appeal of religion should be made to the Gentiles, St. Paul was raised up. Of noble birth, liberal education, a soldier of high rank, a zealous Pharisee, an uncompromising supporter of the most severe measures against the Christians; the conversion of such a

<sup>8</sup> Neander, in his *History of the Planting and Progress of the Christian Church*, has given a new view of the miraculous gifts of the Apostles. He would make them great spiritual endowments. It is impossible to stop to criticise every point I must cursorily mention. I can only say that the view taken by this learned man, though very ingenious, is unsupported by antiquity; is contrary to the literal interpretation of the text; is totally destructive of one of the principal arguments for the

truth of revelation, and of one chief explanation of the rapid progress of the Gospel; and is opposed also to that dictate of natural reason which would demand a miracle to prove the truth of a professed supernatural revelation.

<sup>9</sup> Burton's *History of the Christian Church*, chap. viii. See also Dodwell's *First Dissertation on Irenæus*. The subject has been lately revived by Mr. Newman. See the Essay prefixed to the first volume of his *Translation of Fleury's History of the Church*.

man would impress the whole nation with astonishment and curiosity. If St. Paul had been asked what evidence would convince him that Christianity was true; he would have said, "Let the God of my fathers appear to me as he did to the patriarchs, that I may know that the law of Moses is abrogated by the same authority which enacted it."—This was done. He was permitted to see Christ in his glory, and to hear the voice from heaven which accompanied the manifestation of his glory. St. Paul was set apart from above to the Apostolic office. Immediately after his conversion it was announced to him, by one of the teachers who was imbued with the Divine wisdom then imparted to the Church, that he was destined to that office. Three years' retirement, however, in Arabia, were deemed necessary before he could assume the duty of a Christian teacher. Many circumstances, too, occurred which induced him to forsake, for a time, the more public exercise of his functions; and he went down to his native city, Tarsus. When the destined season, however, came that he was to commence the labours to which, after his conversion, he was declared to be set apart, the Church at Antioch, to which he had been brought from Tarsus by Barnabas; and where he had continued a whole year, exercising the functions of an Apostle, as the Holy Spirit had appointed, and to which he had been set apart; was commanded to give their solemn sanction to that more extensive mission among the Gentiles which an inspired prophet had assured him he must fulfil. In the execution of the duties of this mission, he went everywhere preaching the Gospel, founding Churches, and ordaining teachers. The mode of his founding Churches is to be learned from the history in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and from his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. He preached indiscriminately both to Jews and Gentiles. When his preaching, by God's blessing upon it, had induced a certain number of converts to embrace Christianity, he ordained a teacher, or elder, who had sometimes power to ordain others. When he ordained him, he called in, to the service of setting him apart, those whom he had already gathered round him as the earliest among the converts. This body was the presbytery. In the first single congregation which he might form, the presbytery would consist of the chief converts. When that

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one congregation had become so numerous that it was unavoidably compelled to divide itself into several; more teachers would be required, and the aggregate of these teachers, in conjunction with the principal converts, would form the presbytery. In the early Church, therefore, the power of the Apostle, though his power was derived from God, and not from man, was exercised, in the matter of ordaining, in conjunction with those around him. He ordained by the laying on of his hands, and as an Apostle invested with Divine, infallible, supreme power to do so; but he set an example to his followers, of requiring the sanction of the elderhood, or presbytery, to his proceedings. The gifts of the Holy Spirit followed, or attended, this laying on of his hands; and thus, before the destruction of Jerusalem, principally by the exertions of St. Paul, Churches which were in constant communion with each other, were established in all the principal places of the civilized Roman world. The inestimable Epistles, in most of which he appeals to his authority as an Apostle, as well as to his labours, his sufferings, and his successes, were written within the same time; and no proof whatever can be found at this period, that any teacher was accepted by the early Churches who had not authority to teach, granted to him by a spiritual superior. This was the state of the Churches at the time of the death of St. John. Various societies had been established all over the Roman world. The members of these societies, or Churches, professed the Apostles' doctrine, having received the completed Scriptures, which were gathered into one volume about the time of Trajan, soon after the death of St. John<sup>1</sup>. They were bound together by mutual love, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the ministry of men who had been ordained and set apart to the office of teacher by those, to whom God, by revelation, had granted the power to ordain. In matters of civil regulation the laws of society may be so altered, that the people, conventionally speaking, may call themselves the origin of all just power. We are required to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; and being men, we may make our own ordinances; but in matters of religion, the people never can be the authors of ecclesiastical authority.

<sup>1</sup> On the completion of the Canon of the New Testament, see Mills's *Prolegomena*, § 10.

The commission to teach must be given to every Christian teacher from another source than the caprice, the laws, or the regulations of mere human polity. Privileges, rank, honours, sufferings, proscription, or contempt, may be variously assigned to Christian teachers by the state or by the people, by the nobles or by the rabble; but the abstract authority to preach the Gospel must be given by those who have authority; when they are satisfied of the fitness of the person who may be recommended, supported, and approved by the people.

The polity which thus prevailed in the Churches at the death of St. John, was continued by his contemporaries and their successors. This is demonstrated from the writings of Clement, whose name is mentioned by St. Paul as a fellow-labourer, and whose name was in the book of life; of Polycarp of Smyrna, and of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in the year 69, while some of the Apostles were still alive. The quotations from the letters of Ignatius are so familiarly known, that it is sufficient to allude only to their repeated injunctions to the converts to be united in one body with their ruler, whom he calls their bishop, with the body of the presbyters, and with the deacons<sup>2</sup>. The general law of the Churches, though there were certain accidental exceptions to the rule<sup>3</sup>, appears to have been, that in every society of

<sup>2</sup> See them collected and illustrated by Bingham, ii. 1, § 2; and Morinus, de Sacris Ecclesiæ Ordinationibus, vol. iii. p. 36. An edition of an early Syriac version of the Epistles of Ignatius has recently been published by Mr. Cureton, of the British Museum, which is of much importance as deciding the long disputed question respecting the genuineness of these epistles.

<sup>3</sup> See on this subject the invaluable Treatise of Dr. Russell, now Bishop of Glasgow, (8vo, Edinb. 1830,) on the Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy; with Taylor, Hall, Medler, Ramsay, Maurice, Potter, and a host of others. Dr. Russell proves, by unanswerable evidence, that while the words which we translate Bishop and Elder, had a common meaning in the beginning, there existed three distinct orders in the Church in the Apostolic age, and in the following age, and down to the present day. The fact, indeed, is so undeniable, that if Bishop Balma, of Geneva, had not run away three hun-

dred years ago, the subject would never have been made a matter of controversy.

See, especially, the invaluable Treatise on Church Government, by Abp. Potter, who, though his whole argument unanswerably demonstrates the Apostolic origin, the Scriptural descent, the continued authority, and the united testimony of antiquity, in favour of episcopacy; does not deny that some exceptions were to be found even in the earliest ages to the proposition, that no persons whatever preached to the people unless they were episcopally ordained. It must not be concealed, he observes, that there are some early examples of laymen preaching in the Church, as will appear by the following relation which we find in Eusebius, H. E. vi. 3. 19; who reports, "that Origen happening to come from Egypt to Cæsarea, in Palestine, was desired by the Bishops of that country to preach and to expound the Scriptures publicly in the Church before he was

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believers there were three classes or descriptions of teachers, those who were invested with authority to ordain, but generally in conjunction with the presbytery, or council of presbyters, and not as autocrats; the teachers who were not invested with that power, and the teachers who were assistants to the others. In other words, there were three orders and degrees of ministers, generally known by the names, and exactly answering to the idea, of bishops, priests, and deacons. To these alone was committed the power to rule, instruct, and regulate the Churches; and this form of polity being of Divine origin, of Apostolic example, of universal adoption, and of allowed utility, has been maintained by perpetual succession among Christians to the present day.

Let us descend still lower, till we arrive at the days of the teaching of Christ Himself, and the establishment and discipline of the Church of Jerusalem; that is, the period during which the last effusion of that Divine influence, which

ordained presbyter; which appears from the defence which Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus, Bishop of Cæsarea, made for themselves, when Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote to them, "that it was a thing never heard of in former times, nor then practised, that laymen should preach in the presence of Bishops." To this they replied, "that he was manifestly in the wrong; there having been several instances of laymen, whom the holy Bishops, finding them qualified to instruct the brethren, desired to preach to the congregation. Thus Euelpis preached at Laranda, at the request of Neon; Paulinus, at Iconium, being desired by Celsus; and Theodorus, at Synada, at the desire of Atticus; and it is probable that the same is done in other places, though we do not know of it\*." And in the Apostolical Constitutions, St. Paul is introduced, allowing "laymen, who are skilful in speaking, and of honest conversation, to teach." Whence it may be observed—first, that it was not common for laymen to preach, since the Bishop of Alexandria in the

third century had never heard any example of it; and the other Bishops who were concerned to defend their having permitted Origen to preach, by as many examples as they could produce, alleged only three; and seem to confess, they know of no more. Secondly, that this was done without a special licence from the Bishop; so that all which can be inferred hence is, that some in the third century believed it lawful for the Bishop to allow laymen, whom they found qualified, to instruct the people.—Potter's Church Government, p. 239, where the words of Eusebius are quoted from his Ecclesiastical History, ch. xix.

On verifying this quotation, however, from Archbishop Potter, I find a note of Valesius, in which he expresses his opinion that Origen must have catechized or lectured to a private auditory at Alexandria; for Demetrius could not otherwise have alleged this as an objection against Alexander the Bishop. Rufinus, he says, was mistaken, when he affirms that Demetrius permitted Origen to catechize publicly in the Church.

\* Euseb. H. E. vi. 19, where see the Notes of Valesius; and also Bingham, xiv. 4, § 4.

had granted, in every age, from the creation of man till the writing of the final book of the New Testament, a revelation to man; begun with John the Baptist, and ended with John the Divine. The Baptist was the prophet who connected the dispensation of Moses with that of Christ. He was the prophet of an intermediate dispensation between the Law and the Gospel<sup>4</sup>. The word of the Lord, says the sacred narrative, came to John; that is, the Divine emanation which impressed superhuman ideas upon the mind of man, for the benefit of the spiritual Church, came to John. He was the teacher of the people; neither chosen by the people, nor commissioned by the people, but commanded by a Theopneusted influence to speak to the people, and to assure them that their Messiah was at hand. The first members of the Christian Church, the first disciples of Christ prior to their following Him, had been the disciples of John the Baptist, who saw Him walking among them, and were assured by the Baptist that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lamb of God. That moment was the connecting of the two dispen-

<sup>4</sup> The dispensation of John the Baptist is generally considered as the mere introduction to that which followed it. This, however, is not the way in which this point ought to be regarded. Properly speaking, there are four separate dispensations, and the time may come when there may be a fifth. The first is, that of the law, partly with and partly without a severe ceremonial. This extended from the creation to the time of the Baptist—"the law and the prophets were until John." (Matt. xi. 13.) The second is the dispensation of repentance, connecting the law with the Gospel, and pointing to the violators of the law, the atonement which must be sought after repentance. The third dispensation was that of Christ,—it was that of atonement. The fourth dispensation is that under which we live, the more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the result of the atonement, and the consequence of the intercession of Christ. As the dispensations of Moses and of the Baptist were introductory to the present, so the present also is but introductory to the fifth, that of the millennium; or, to avoid a technical term, that of the completion on earth of one great object of all revelation,—a state of things

in which there shall be more good than evil, more virtue than vice, more religion than infidelity, more knowledge than ignorance, more zeal than sloth, more holiness than its opposite, and when the Tree of Life shall again be planted upon earth. Lord, hasten thy kingdom! Thy kingdom come! These five dispensations, rightly considered, appeal to the hearts and consciences of each individual. We begin our Christian course under the law. The knowledge of our sin, which the law teaches, is to guide us to repentance. Repentance, alone, is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin, and it teaches us the necessity of atonement. But the pardon of the sins that are past, is not of itself sufficient to prevent the dominion of evil within us; and atonement, therefore, leads us to prayer for the power which shall overthrow the dominion of evil, and convert and change the soul. The consequence of all—of conviction, repentance, pardon, and holiness—is happiness, under the consciousness that, by God's continued favour, good is more prevalent than evil within the thoughts and affections of the heart. Blessed are those who read the Scriptures with a view to their personal improvement!

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sations. The Baptist, until he was imprisoned, continued his public preaching, declaring to the people that the Messiah was upon the earth. During this period Christ wrought his miracles in Galilee, conversed with Nicodemus, and wrought but one more public work, in the cleansing of the temple at Jerusalem. John was imprisoned. Christ then began to teach more openly; and when the number of his followers required it, He chose twelve, then seventy, and at the day of Pentecost He poured out the gifts He had promised on the hundred and twenty, who had met from among the five hundred brethren to whom He had appeared after his resurrection, and from the other disciples who had embraced his instructions. These were the numbers respectively of the patriarchs, the heads of tribes, of the Sanhedrim, and of the great synagogue of Ezra. It was believed in the ancient Church, that this coincidence was intended. The men who were among the hundred and twenty disciples of Christ, were the first teachers, after the death of Christ, of his word and sacraments. Some of them, and not improbably all of them, were endued with such Divine power, that their chief speaker, Peter, struck dead to the earth, with his word, two persons who had been guilty of the crime of affirming that they had given to the Apostles the whole price of a possession, when they kept back part of the money. The influence of a Divine power rested so evidently and manifestly among the Apostles and first founders of Christianity, that great fear, and great reverential awe, (Acts ii. 43,) overwhelmed the people. At this time we may safely affirm, that no person would have dared to take upon himself the office of Christian teacher, baptizer, or administrator of the sacrament, unless he was either miraculously or Apostolically appointed to the same. The people continued stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine and communion, in breaking bread<sup>5</sup>,

<sup>5</sup> I do not think it necessary to stop here to discuss the question whether the expression *τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*, Acts ii. 42, refers to a common meal, or the agape, or to the Eucharist. Every allusion to Scripture might lead to a dissertation. I shall only say, that I believe it to refer to the agape, on which a valuable discussion has been given to the world by the late

Dr. Charles Townley. The Syriac translators, Lightfoot, Wolfius, and Schöetgen, interpret the expression, of the Eucharist; Mosheim, I think, approves the point of the agape; and Doddridge, Grotius, and others, of the common meal. Bloomfield understands by this expression, the common participation of meals taken in charitable communion and religious thankfulness,

either as an agape or love-feast; or in constant commemoration of the death of Christ, under the influence of their inspired teachers; and they presented a picture, we may trust, of the latter days, when the world shall be converted to God, and the prophecies of the extension of the Church be completed.

The time now arrived when the multitude of the converts increased so rapidly at Jerusalem, that the Apostles were not able to attend to the minute affairs of the Church, and they appointed, therefore, a certain number of assistants who should aid them in the inferior offices. The duty of ruling the Church still belonged to the Apostles. A persecution arises. The converts are scattered. They go forth everywhere preaching the word. (Acts viii. 4; xi. 9.) They travel to Samaria, where Philip preached to the Samaritans (Acts viii. 5); to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch. (Acts xi. 20.) They preach to the Jews only, probably in the synagogues. They were either ordained by the Apostles, or they preached as inspired persons; or they preached as Christians, anxious for the honour of God, without an express commission<sup>6</sup>.

and followed by prayer. The reason he assigns for not understanding these words of the agapæ, is the probability that these were not yet in being; having, he thinks, originated at a somewhat later period, when the custom of having all things in common, practicable only in a small society, had been discontinued.

<sup>6</sup> The words used in the Book of the Acts to describe their preaching, are, *εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λόγον* (Acts viii. 4); *λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον* (Acts xi. 19); while that of Philip, the deacon, is related by a word which seems to imply more authority. It is said, (Acts viii. 5,) *Φίλιππος δὲ ἐκήρυσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν Χριστόν*: he heralded Christ. The other expressions, however, are used to describe the preaching of those who had undoubted authority to preach the Gospel. This has induced many to affirm, that private

Christians were allowed to preach; and the supposition has been strengthened by the declaration of St. Ambrose, or rather the author usually called Ambrosiaster, who declares, in his Commentary on the Ephesians, p. 948, edit. Basil, 1567, that at first all Christians preached\*. It appears, however, from examining the whole history, that at the persecution under Saul, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem (Acts viii. 1); also, that many of the disciples were with them (Acts ix. 26). It is concluded, therefore, that the disciples who were scattered, and who preached, were either the deacons, or those who were most active at Jerusalem next to the Apostles; as we read of Philip, the deacon, planting the Gospel in Samaria under this very persecution. Others interpret the passage as referring only to those of the general mass who were scattered abroad, who were ordained

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\* By this he probably means no more than that in the Apostolic times, all those who had been endowed with supernatural gifts, were permitted to preach, which is exactly similar to the passage of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 31; upon which see Estius, and also Bingham, xiv. 4, § 4.

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Great success attended them. Whatever was the authority under which they acted, the Apostles exercised over their converts the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical superiors. They sent Peter and John to Samaria, (Acts viii. 14,) that they might impart the Divine gifts, which Philip, not being an Apostle, was unable to bestow; and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to make inquiries respecting the converts (Acts xi. 22) which had been made there by the preachers who had left Jerusalem in the persecution. It is about this time that we first meet with the word Elders, (Acts xi. 30,) or Presbyters, who were the same as the Bishops, or Episcopi; the name was common to each, and denoted the same persons, and the same offices; but they were inferior to the Apostles, to whom the power of ruling in the Church was confined. In the next chapter

to the office by partaking of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, even though they were not ordained by the Apostles. Others (and this is the best way of meeting the supposed difficulty) believe, that whether they were ordained or not, they did that only which every wise and good man would do under similar circumstances. They endeavoured by evangelizing, by converting, by speaking in the synagogues, as strangers were sometimes permitted to do, to make known, wherever they went, the wonderful tidings of the Gospel of God. They were ready always to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that is in them; as both men and women who believe in Jesus Christ are bound to do, to the utmost of their power. If any layman who receives the New Testament as true, either goes to, or is banished among any of his brethren of mankind who have not heard of the Word of God; it is the bounden duty of that layman to endeavour to make the Gospel known to the utmost of his power. Necessity would constitute a temporary ordination; but such layman should learn, from the instance before us, that such necessity does not supersede the authority of those who are ordained to superintend the Churches of God. If one part of this

precedent is to be made our guide, the other part, also, ought to be no less imperative and binding upon us. These very Christians, who went everywhere abroad, in consequence of a persecution, and evangelized and preached everywhere, formed a part of the Church in general, and considered themselves subject to its commands; for when the account of the efforts of these scattered Christians was brought to the ears of the Church at Jerusalem, they sent forth Barnabas, who was a prophet, or one invested with authority by the Holy Ghost, to see what was done, and to set in order whatever was wanting: and to that authority both the converts and their teachers, whether ordained or unordained, submitted. That was done in the Apostolic age, which was done three centuries after. We are informed by Theodoret, that the Iberians were converted by the conversation of a captive Christian maid. Upon knowing from her the truth of the Gospel, they sent a petition to Constantine to send ordained ministers among them, who might preach and perform the offices of the Christian ministry. The converting emissaries had not the power of the priest, merely because they had been successful in their religious instruction of the ignorant\*.

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\* See the passages in question in almost every writer on the Primitive Episcopacy. — Heylyn's History of the Episcopacy, p. 199. Giesler, &c. &c.

(Acts xii. 17) we read, that when St. Peter was delivered from prison by a miracle, he directed the people who harboured him, to shew the matter to James and to the brethren. A discussion took place, as we learn (Acts xv.), respecting the necessity of requiring the converts to observe a particular portion of the Mosaic law. A synod is called, at which the Apostles and Elders assemble. The matter is discussed. Paul, Barnabas, and Peter, declare their opinions. When this was done, James rises, and speaking with more authority than either of the others, gives sentence on the matter, and the synod decide. Twenty years after this, when St. Paul goes again up to Jerusalem, he went to James, and all the Elders were present. (Acts xxi. 18.) These facts of themselves appear to afford scanty data for the conclusion, that the Apostles having long held equal authority at Jerusalem, thought it best to give their power to one who should stay at Jerusalem, ordain elders, and govern the Church at that place; while they went to various places to establish Churches, and ordain Elders, as we read St. Paul did in so many cities and countries. It is impossible, however, to reject the inference, that James possessed more of primacy among the Apostles at Jerusalem at the synod, than any other of those present; and the early ecclesiastical historians inform us, that James was called the first Bishop of Jerusalem, because he held there the power of ordaining Presbyters; and, with his Elders, of ruling the Church. This is affirmed by Jerome, by Eusebius, by Chrysostom, by Ignatius, Theophylact, and others. All antiquity is unanimous upon the point, and the unanimity cannot be wisely rejected<sup>7</sup>. They all concur in proving the one point in question; that none can preach except they be sent; that none was permitted to become the teacher without authority from those to whom the power of ordaining had been committed; that the primitive Church, in its first ages, adopted the very system which has been handed down from the days of the Apostles to the present hour, and is maintained in its greatest purity by the Episcopal Churches—that there should be, in every Christian society, the teacher who

<sup>7</sup> This question, especially in such of its bearings as affect the claims of the Church of Rome, is well treated by Buddeus, de Eccl. Apost., p. 217; and especially by Ant. de Dominis, de

Republ. Eccles., ii. 2, § 15; who, to many deductions from Scripture, has added a large mass of evidence from the Fathers.

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ordains; the teacher who joins the ordainer, but without him has no power to send the labourer into the vineyard; and the teacher who assists the former, and is the candidate for the higher offices in the Church of God. Thus it is that primitive antiquity confirms the general truth. All societies must have some government, and the principle of Episcopacy rightly considered will be found to pervade every system of polity that has ever been adopted by mankind. Among the Christian Churches it is called Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; or ruler, teacher, assistant. It corresponds with the polity of the patriarchal government, the father, the first-born, and the younger children:—with the high-priest, priest, and Levite of the Mosaic orders:—with that of the Jews after their dispersion, in the Apostle who visited their synagogues, the Elders of the synagogue, and the Chazan, or ministers:—with that of the Romans in their pontifex maximus, the pontifices, and the lower priesthood:—with that of the Presbyterians in the moderator, the presbyter, and the coadjutor. It is the language of nature, of Scripture, and of law, that there should ever be in every society, church, kingdom, or family, the authority to rule, the active agent to administer the plans of the ruler, and the assistant to the two in all things. I mention these things because I believe that Episcopacy must be the chief means of union among Christians; that as Popery is the perversion of Episcopacy to despotism, and Presbyterianism the perversion of Episcopacy to the destruction of all authority; the government of Christians by Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, according to its outline in Scripture, and its completion in Catholic antiquity, ever is, and ever will be, the best bond of union to a conscientious clergy, and a divided people. Episcopacy was the offspring of the best and purest ages, when Christians were more wise, more holy, more united, than in any subsequent age. It preserves the Church from the usurpations of the Papacy, and the confusions of the rabble-democracy of sectarianism. It is worthy of our admiration and support, for it commends itself to our consciences, as Scriptural; to our reason, as useful; and to our desire for happiness and repose, as the blender into one holy union, of order, peace, and truth.

But even if this form of Church government can be shewn to have been most probably universal before the cessation of

inspiration, how, it has been said, can it be satisfactorily proved that the principles which bound the early Christians in their Churches, or societies, were ordained by them to be of perpetual obligation? What do we mean by obligation? What obliges any person in religious matters to pursue one line of conduct rather than another; or, to adopt one conclusion rather than another?—Obligation, in religion denotes the duty of reason to submit to the will of God, when that will is not only clearly, but, in the absence of demonstrative evidence, probably ascertained. The will of God is learned from revelation in two modes—by positive precept, or by actual institution. Where both of these are united, the conviction of obligation is strengthened. Where the former alone is granted, the will of God must be obeyed as an express command. Where the latter alone is appointed, the will, and therefore the command, must be inferred. Thus, the law of the Sabbath<sup>8</sup>, the ordinance of preaching, the sacrament of baptism, and the commemoration of the death of Christ, are precepts and institutions. They rest, therefore, upon a double foundation. They imply a continued succession of observances in each succeeding generation, and consequently a succession of ministers who should execute the will of God in continuing the Divine appointment. But these observances could have been maintained by the institution of one order of ministers. We no where read a precept, that the instructors of Christians shall be necessarily divided into three gradations. We are not told, “Go into the world and preach the Gospel, observe the Sabbath, administer baptism, dispense the memorials of my death by Bishop, Priest, Deacon, only;” neither do we read that these things are to be done by Priest, or Presbyter, and Deacon; nor by Deacon or Minister only. We are commanded to do them, and the command implies a ministry; and thus far all Christians believe that they have ascertained the will of God. But if the command implies a ministry, and there is no positive precept for the mode in which that ministry is to be appointed and continued, we

<sup>8</sup> I consider that the duty of observing the Sabbath, as a part of the will of God, has been demonstrated by the Bishop of Calcutta, in his seven Sermons on the subject. Also, by the Puritan Divine, John Owen, and by

others who have taken that view of the question, against Heylyn, Whateley, and all who would rest its sacredness on the custom of the Church, rather than on the commands of the Almighty.

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must be contented with the next degree of evidence to ascertain the will of God, and that is the evidence of the Divine institution. We find the power to ordain Presbyters given by St. Paul to one of his converts, with a command that he should exercise that power. He united with him in such ordaining, a council of teachers who did not possess the same authority in the Church which he possessed. This mode of appointing teachers was an action which became a precedent and a custom, which we are assured, by the evidence of that age, was universally adopted. It was received as an institution. It was appointed by those upon whom the Holy Spirit rested. It was the will of God at that time. Is this institution, or observance, or custom, intended to be the precedent for all Christian societies? All Christian Churches are bound to provide for the worship of God, and the instruction of the people; and this, their bounden duty, implies rites, ministers, places of worship, times of service, outward ceremonies, and holy caution, that the teachers be worthy of their office. In the absence of positive precept, is the undoubted institution of the inspired revealer of the will of God to be regarded as a religious obligation, on the consciences of the Churches of God? Is the practice of a divinely-instructed teacher to be considered as a Divine appointment, binding as a law of God, in the absence of an express command? Before the majority of persons would answer the question, they would demand whether the same necessity for the law exists now as existed in the days of St. Paul? This question must be met with an affirmative. Religion is as useful, the soul as valuable, God as holy, Christ as merciful, salvation as precious as ever. The same necessity, therefore, of pure teaching, of watchful superintendence, of careful inquiry, and of divinely originated authority in Churches, exists now as it existed in the age of the Apostles.

What, then, is the answer to the question? The answer which I should give is founded on the consciousness of the weakness of my reason, and the consequent necessity which is imposed upon me to adhere, as much as possible, to that conduct which I infer from the evidence, whether abundant or scanty, to be most conformable to the will of God. "If it be my duty to ascertain that will, and the sources of my knowledge of that will be few, I must use those sources only and be satisfied.

If, therefore, the evidence were even less powerful than I find it to be, in the present instance, I have sufficient to acquaint me with the probable will of God, and to infer that an institution enacted by a divinely instructed teacher in the founding of the first Churches, was of Divine appointment, and therefore, of Divine command, and consequently of Divine obligation. I am bound to adhere to the will of God in preference to my own caprice. I am not permitted to depart from an Apostolical institution at my pleasure. In all my ways I am to acknowledge the Divine Head of the Church, and never to depart from the system which He laid down for its continued and not merely temporary government. This was the belief of the primitive and Catholic antiquity, in which the ages of inspiration and non-inspiration met; when peace, and love, and holiness, and discipline, united in one happy agreement; and primitive Episcopacy, the ultimate, as it was the earliest, bond of union to the followers of the crucified Redeemer, was the result of observance of the Apostolic conduct, and deference to the inferred will of the Divine founder of Christianity<sup>9</sup>."

Another question remains. If the system of Church government, which Catholic and primitive antiquity believed to be that which we now call Episcopacy, be of Divine obligation; to what extent is that obligation binding upon us in

<sup>9</sup> The reader will perceive, that I propose the argument respecting Episcopacy in the most free and liberal and unreserved manner, on the plan of Dr. Balguy, in his celebrated address at Cambridge; though I cannot adopt his conclusions. Because the Apostles exhorted and not enforced, and gave examples and not precepts, Dr. Balguy infers, that it is a matter of indifference whether we follow that example or not. He speaks of the obscurity of the origin of the Church, "*id autem, quod omnium fere gentium originibus, ipsi quoque contigit Ecclesie, ut ejus primordia confusi aliquid et obscuro habeant;*" whereas there is no obscurity at all. Christ, the Apostles, Timothy, and the other teachers, some of whom are mentioned in the New Testament only; others, as Clemens and Hermes, are mentioned both in that and in ecclesiastical history, and behold the Church. Balguy goes on to argue the indif-

ference of Church government. "*Deo,*" he says, "*nec jubente, nec vetante;*" whereas the will of God may, with certainty, be inferred from the Apostolic conduct. He then concludes with the most untenable proposition which a Christian teacher can advocate, that even if a certain form of Church government could be ascertained from Scripture, it would not, therefore, be in itself of Divine obligation. "*Siquis,*" he says, "*perspicue demonstrat quot ministrorum ordines, et quot singulorum ordinum ministri, in primo Ecclesie statu fuerint constituti, vix tamen evinceat necessarium esse, ut unaquęque natio in omne tempus eundem vel ministrorum vel ordinum numerum retineat.*"—p. 367.

"*Ecclesiastici regiminis in Angliā, et in Scotiā, constituti, neutra forma aut juri hominum naturali, aut verbo Dei repugnat.*"—*Disputatio habita in Scholis publicis, anno 1756.*

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that case which has already occurred in the history of the Christian Church? We have the treasure both of Divine truth, as to doctrine; and of Apostolic discipline, as to government, in the earthen vessels of fallible and uninspired men. What obligation lies upon the conscience, if the teachers, the rightly appointed teachers of the Church, instruct the people in doctrines which are inconsistent with the Scriptures, and therefore with truth, and the right conclusions of our soberly exercised reason?

The nature of the authority of a Christian teacher over the consciences of the people has been already shown to be that of an aged father over adult and thoughtful children. As the authority of the parent emanates from God, and still must be exerted to the conventional submission of his children: so the authority of the Christian teacher emanates from God; yet it must be exerted with constant attention to the conventional judgment of a body of adult and reflecting sons, who are guided by an inspired revelation, and are privileged to use their own reason. As the most attached, affectionate, and religious children may find it to be their duty to disobey the commands of a kind but erring father, and if they are compelled to do so, will lament the fatal necessity, and disobey his unreasonsble injunctions with tears and grief; so also may it be with the most religious members of the Catholic Churches of Christ. So it was at that unavoidable yet melancholy period, when a stern and severe necessity called upon the members of a certain portion of the Holy Catholic Church to protest against the teaching of those to whom they wished to have listened with deference and respect. Religious error on the part of the rulers of a Church is a greater evil than religious division on the part of the people. The one is the dead palsy, the other the painful convulsion. Both are evils: but the one brings unresisted spiritual death, the other is the struggle for the restoration of spiritual life. Implicit, unenquiring, unreserved, Scripture-resigning, reason-yielding submission to any class of teachers, therefore, is not demanded as the acceptable homage of the soul to God in the Christian dispensation. The only care of the humble worshipper must be, that he do not overstep the example furnished by those who at the time of the Reformation resisted the authority to which they had been accustomed

to yield implicit obedience. The authority of a Church over the conscience ceases where the inspired revelation is contradicted or opposed<sup>1</sup>. If it shall be said that the door is thus opened to the folly of every capricious separatist, we can only say, that it is in the moral world as it is in the visible creation, as the earth is retained in its orbit by the action of various opposing powers, each of which would impel it to destruction if left to itself; as the force of repulsion would drive it into infinite space, if it was not resisted and restrained by the force of attraction, which compels it to roll on in its destined course, and thus to accomplish in its order the career which the Creator has commanded—just so is the soul of man. The error of his reason, whether in rejecting revelation by infidelity, or perverting revelation by Socinianism, or Romanism, would bear away the soul to the desolation and ruin of its repulsion from God. The pure word of the unchanging Scripture rectifies the tendency to fly away from the harmony of its appointed course, attracts the spirit, and preserves it in the way of salvation.

But if the authority of the Church is thus spiritual and limited to the expression of its opinion as a father over his adult children, what is the power of the Church when it desires to inflict censure upon those who wilfully and causelessly despise its authority? As the Church is a society, and every society possesses power to compel the observance

<sup>1</sup> Here arises the long disputed question, who is to judge whether or no revelation be contradicted?

According to the interpretation of the Church of Rome, the Church is the divinely constituted interpreter of Scripture, and therefore the sole and paramount judge of the truth or error of any interpretation of Scripture, consequently of any doctrine. But by the term "Church," the Church of Rome seems to understand only the clerical portion of the community, whether it be the pope or the council, or both; and does not allow the laity any part or lot in the matter. In so doing she departs from the primitive definition of a Church, as given by nearly all ecclesiastical writers from the earliest ages, and admitted by Mr. Newman, in his remarks on our Twenty-ninth Article, contained in his celebrated Tract 90.

But St. Paul, when he held an ordination, or judged of an heresy, assembled a portion of the laity to aid him in his decisions. Thus the Church gave the ordination by St. Paul's hands; the Church gave sentence against heresy by St. Paul's mouth.

With regard to the evils which may arise from the unlimited use of reason in judging of revelation, errors may probably arise; man is accountable to God for his opinions as well as his actions, according to the opportunities which he has enjoyed of forming them. But may not a reasoning being be more inclined to doubt the truth of revelation altogether, if he discover that the guardians of that revelation forbid him to examine into the truths which it professes to teach, than if, as in our own Church, he is exhorted and encouraged to search the Scriptures?

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of its authority, such power does every Church possess to enforce the decrees or the decisions which may condemn the conduct of its own members; and the exercise of such power cannot be called persecution. All Churches are spiritual societies gathered out of the world, and united for spiritual purposes only. Their authority, therefore, must be only spiritual; and the punishment which such societies are able to inflict upon their members, must be consequently merely spiritual. This conclusion will be found upon enquiry to be that to which all Christian societies have arrived. Every society must, for the sake of its own preservation, possess the power of expelling from among its members the person who breaks its laws, distracts its unity, or scandalizes the body by offences. Every Christian society, therefore, possesses this power; and to this power alone, however different may be the opinions respecting the origin, nature, extent, or consequence of such power, every Church lays claim. This power is called Excommunication, and the manner in which that excommunication is to be inflicted is prescribed, as all Christian Churches affirm, in the directions given to the founders of all the Churches, in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. We are there told, that after offence has been given, private admonition, and then public complaint, are to be the remedies first adopted for the cure of the evil. If these are disregarded, the Church, that is, the society to which the offending member belongs, is to inflict censure. If that censure is despised, then the offender is to be regarded as a heathen man and a publican. This expression appears to be the same in meaning as that of St. Paul, who speaks of delivering a contumacious offender unto Satan. The right interpretation of this sentence is, that as every Church is a society of persons who profess not to be heathens, or persons unworthy of the regard of the Israel of God, and to be delivered also from the power of Satan; the expelling of such persons from the Church is merely the declaration of that Church that they are to be regarded in the opposite light: that they are as heathen men, unworthy of regard, and given back to the power of the evil from which they professed to have escaped; and the infliction of this sentence in the days of St. Paul was so fearful to the person upon whom it was pronounced, that it occasioned the remorse, and sorrow, and

repentance, which ended in the penitent again seeking with tears restoration to the privileges of a Christian communion. Every body of Christians still claims, and that justly, the same authority, and it is the only authority which a Church possesses<sup>2</sup>. In consequence of the numerous divisions of the

<sup>2</sup> There is a singular unity of opinion upon the subject of excommunication, as the proper remedy for ecclesiastical evils, among the four great bodies of Christians, into which the universal Church of God is divided. If the time should ever, indeed, arrive, when union will be studied, and the primitive discipline revived, this agreement might be useful as a common bond of amity. The view which is given by Bingham in his *Ant.*, b. xvi., is nearly the same as that which all these parties have adopted. We never can understand thoroughly the propositions which enable us to arrive safely at theological conclusions, unless we refer to the opinions of all parties. I have selected, therefore, the views of excommunication adopted by our own Church, by the Church of Rome, by the Presbyterians in Scotland, and by the Independents in England. It will be seen that they are nearly all the same.

The *Reformatio Legum* is the title given to the volume which was drawn up by certain divines of the Church of England in the reign of Edward VI. It contained the recommendations of those divines for the enactment of a more regular system of discipline in the English Church, which the death of the young king prevented from being carried into effect. It speaks thus on the subject of excommunication :

“Quid sit excommunicatio ?

“Excommunicatio potestas est et autoritas ad Ecclesiam, a Deo perfecta, quæ facinorosas personas, vel de religione nostra corrupte sentientes, et ad suam improbabilitatem adhærentes, a perceptione Sacramentorum, ac etiam Christianorum Patrum usu, tantisper summovet, donec sensus sanos recollegerint, et salutarium cogitationum apta signa dederint, et pœnas etiam Ecclesiasticas adierint, quibus ferocia carnis comprimitur, ut spiritus salvus fiat.”—p. 159, edit. London, 1640.

“Excommunication is the power and authority given to the Church, by which she removes from participation of the Sacraments as well as communion

with Christians, persons either of a wicked life, or holding erroneous opinions respecting our religion, and adhering to their wickedness, until they shall have come to a right mind, and given evident proofs of proper thoughts; and also undergone ecclesiastical punishments (penalties), by which the depravity of the flesh is restrained, so that the soul may be saved.”

The doctrine of the Church of Rome is given us by Thomas Aquinas and by Dens. Neither of their definitions, however, alludes to the tremendous consequences which followed the sentence of excommunication in those ages when the power of the Church was at its height.

“Excommunicatio est separatio à communione Ecclesiæ, quoad fructum et suffragia generalia.”—T. Aquinas, *Supp. Quæst.* xxi. a. 1.

“Quid est excommunicatio major ?

“Est censura Ecclesiastica privans aliquem communione fidelium ex toto ; vel, ut alii definiunt, est censura privans communi victu fidelium, communione activâ et passivâ sacramentorum, et suffragium Ecclesiæ generalium.”—Dens’ *Theology*, vol. vi. p. 379.

The next definition is that of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian communion of Scotland.

“Of Church censures.

“The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers distinct from the civil magistrate.

“To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent both by the word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

“Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the

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universal Church, or of the prevalence of indifference to the censure of Christian Churches, the sentence of excommunication would be received, in the present age, with contempt or scorn, as a matter of little moment. The excommunicated Independent would form a new society. The excommunicated Presbyterian would become an Independent. The excommunicated Episcopalian would seek some strange society; or, as recent instances have shown, would endeavour to form a sect of his own, and become a snare and a stumbling-block to others. The excommunicated Roman Catholic would become an Infidel. The expelled from every separate Church in the present day would probably seek other resources in their expulsion than submission to their various Churches; and, if they did so, there is not one Christian society in this country that would affirm it has any other authority, or power, than the exercise of this spiritual

whole lump, for vindicating the honours of Christ and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

"To the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person."—Confession of Faith, pp. 166, 167, Edinburgh, 1810.

The learned John Owen, the great defender of the Independent or Congregational mode of worship, who is regarded as the restorer, if not the founder, of that polity, expresses himself with no less clearness.

"The power of the Church towards its members may be referred into three heads. First, The *admission* of members into its society. Secondly, The *rule* and edification of those that belong to it. Thirdly, The *exclusion* out of its society of such as *obstinately* refuse to live and walk according unto the laws and rules of it. And these things belong essentially and inseparably unto every free society, and are comprehensive of all Church powers whatever. The *third* is the power of excommunication.

"The *privileges* from which men are excluded, by excommunication, are not such as they have any natural or civil right unto, but merely such as are granted unto the Church by Jesus Christ; and men cannot, by virtue of any agreement among themselves, without a warrant from him by his institution, *expel others* from the privileges which are merely of his grant and donation. He alone, therefore, hath given and granted this power unto the Church, namely, of excluding any, by the rules and ways of his appointment, from the privileges of his grant, which is the peculiar power of excommunication."—The True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government, pp. 190. 200, by John Owen, D.D., quarto, London, 1689.

The most singular instance which I remember to have read of the perversion of the power of excommunication, is that recorded of Sixtus V., who anathematized any person who stole a book out of the Vatican Library.

*Siquis secus fecerit, libros, librumve aliquem abstulerit, extraxerit, elepserit, rapseritque, carperit, corruperit, dolo malo, ille a fidelium communione ejectus, maledictus, anathematis vinculo colligatus esto; a quoquam præterquam Romano Pontifice ne absolvitur.*—Antonius Cienella, de Bibliothecâ Vaticanâ, p. 112, ap. Mader. de Biblioth. 4to. Helmstadt, 1702.

censure. In the ages that are past, the case was very different. The sentence of excommunication was a source of awe to the conscientious, of horror to the tender-minded, of fear to all<sup>3</sup>. As the Churches extended, and as the influence of the priesthood increased, many questions arose respecting the extent of the censure of excommunication; to whom the power of pronouncing sentence, and of first judging the offence was committed; the nature and number of the offences; the admonition which was to precede it; and the degree and kind of punishment which was to be inflicted. Other questions, too, were added referring to the censures of the Churches on the favourers of the excommunicated; and to the severities of which those were worthy who, having been excommunicated, were obstinate in their real or supposed errors in doctrine, or offences in conduct. The penance to be exacted from those who desired to be reconciled, as well as the mode of reconciling them, with many other controverted and difficult matters, tended to increase the power of the rulers in the Churches. The civil power was called in to execute the decrees of the ecclesiastics, who had gradually changed the spiritual censure into a temporal punishment. Pain to the body was prescribed as an atonement for the sins, for which no blood-shedding but that of the Great Sacrifice could atone; till the lands in which Christian Churches were established were defiled with the blood of heretics, the burning of martyrs, the sorrows of penance commanded by the ecclesiastics, and enforced by the temporal magistrate. Unrequired, useless, needless, unscriptural punishments were enacted by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities united in one legislature; and the one great primary source of the corruption and misery that prevailed was the perversion of this one truth—that spiritual excommunication is the penalty for a spiritual offence. The power of excommunication, the threatening, the fear, the infliction, the hope of remission, the conditions of that remission of excommunication, were the sole sources of the punishments which so long desolated and convulsed the world. This, and this alone, the appeal of the priest to the magistrate to enforce the censures and excommunication of the Church,

<sup>3</sup> See this subject well treated by Boehmer, *Dissertat. Juris Ecclesiast. Antiq.*, p. 149.

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is the fountain of that torrent of blood which has stained the robes of the Christian priesthood; and disgraced before the heathen and the infidel the very name and profession of the religion of peace and love.

But if this spiritual excommunication, it may be said, is the only weapon which can be wielded by a Christian society, in what manner is obedience to be enforced when such excommunication is despised and scorned; and how can the magistrate fulfil his first, known, bounden duty of establishing the public morality upon the basis of religion, when that religion may be despised with impunity? We answer to the first of these questions, that if the conscience of the Christian be rightly instructed he will learn to value the spiritual motive above the temporal and human; and also, that experience has demonstrated beyond all doubt, that the sword of the magistrate cannot produce the spiritual sorrow which alone would justify a Church in restoring the excommunicated to communion. It will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, said our

Matt. x. 15. Lord, than for those who reject you. The reasoning of human wisdom, then, would say, "Compel them by argument, by fire, by sword, by torture, by any severity, in spite of the cry of persecution, to submit to the censures of the true Church, that they may escape the fearful sentence which is thus pronounced." No; another rule was given. If a man will not listen to the censures and admonition, to the arguments and persuasions of the Church, let him only be to you as one not belonging to your society of Christians. Leave him to the God of all. Regard him no more as a Christian. He has ceased to be of your communion. Whether he will hear or not, let his only punishment be, that the religious and the virtuous who fear God and love Christ, avoid him as unfit and unworthy to unite with them in spiritual worship. He will slander or persecute them as righteous overmuch, or stigmatize them with opprobrious epithets. They are only to look on him as the heathen who knows not the covenant of his God. The decision of St. Paul respecting the person who has always been considered as a proper subject for excommunication is the same as that of Christ. A man that

Tit. i. 10. is an heretic (that is, one who has adopted and taught opinions which the Church to which he belonged did not

teach or sanction), reject. "Let him be dismissed from among the company of believers. Esteem him no more as one of your number;" and this was to be the only mode of punishing the offender who deserved the censure of the Church. No bodily punishment was inflicted. The sentence of St. Paul inferred no civil penalty, no bodily suffering. When the disciples, too, requested our Lord to call down fire from heaven to inflict severe temporal calamity on those who rejected His teaching, He assured them that the spirit of the new law which He came to promulge was different from the law of severity enforced by Moses. He refused so to punish the denier of the truth of his teaching; and He has left an example to his followers, that they never punish with torture, sufferings, and death, any fellow-being who is guilty of the fatal crime of rejecting salvation. The offender may be repelled from their communion; but no Christian society is invested with the power to coerce<sup>4</sup>. While every Christian society must be able, for its own government and preservation, to decide on its terms of communion and its modes of discipline, such Church, though it possesses all authority, possesses no power. It has authority to persuade, but not the power to coerce. Authority is not power. Authority is that privilege which is inherent in every society to influence, direct, decide, and even morally to command. Power is the

Luke ix. 54.

<sup>4</sup> "The religious society or Church," says Warburton, "being instituted to preserve purity of faith and worship, its ultimate end is the *salvation of souls*. From whence it follows :—

"First, That the religious society must needs be sovereign and independent on the civil.

"Secondly, That this independent religious society hath not, in and of itself, any coactive power of the civil kind; its inherent jurisdiction being, in its nature and use, entirely different from that of the state. For if civil society was instituted for the attainment of one species of good, (all other good requisite to human happiness being to be attained without it,) and that civil society attains the good for which it was ordained, by the sole mean of coercive power; then it follows that the good which any other kind of society seeks may be attained without that power; consequently coercive

power is unnecessary to a religious society. But that mean which is unnecessary for the attainment of any end, is likewise unfit in all cases but in that where such mean is rendered unnecessary by the use of other means of the same kind or species. But religious society attains its end by means of a different kind; therefore coercive power is not only unnecessary, but unfit. Again, ends, in their nature different, can never be attained by one and the same mean. Thus, in the case before us, coercive power can only influence us to outward practice; by outward practice only is the good which civil society aims at immediately effected, therefore is coercive power peculiarly fit for civil society. But the good which religious society aims at cannot be effected by outward practice, therefore coercive power is altogether unfit for this society."—Warburton's Divine Legislation, ii. 269—271, London, 1811.

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privilege which enforces the will of authority by action, coercion, or privation. A father in a family, to refer to the analogy already mentioned, while his children are young, possesses authority to teach them, and power to punish them. The same parent, when his children cease to be young, has the authority to command; but he has not the power to compel that authority to be obeyed. The *authority* is of Divine origin and still remains. The *power* is conventional; and is, therefore, the subject of enquiry, thought, reason, deliberation, and eventually the foundation of obedience, or the contrary, to the child. This is the difference, as I have before shown, between the Jewish Church and the Christian Church. The Church of Israel was the ruler and governor over its people. It had authority to declare God's will; and it had power, also, to compel obedience. It was the Church of the spiritual servant, and of the spiritual slave. The universal Church of Christ, in all nations and communities, appeals no more to the human being on the principle of fear and compulsion; but is as a reasoning father among adult and reasoning children. Each separate Church possesses the authority to propose the truth to its people, and to leave the individuals to whom it speaks to the judgment of God. It possesses no power to punish, coerce, or injure. It appeals to us as the sons of God, as reasonable, thinking, rational, erring, dying men; and it leaves us to reject or adopt its teaching, discipline, and doctrines, at our peril. It declares us to be responsible at the judgment-seat of God; but not to be the subjects of human tribunals, or human inflictions, for moral conclusions, and spiritual decision<sup>5</sup>. Moral persuasion, and the expulsion of the unworthy, are its only allowable weapons. All else is persecution; in which no Church, society, sect, party, or government, is justified in indulging. The scaffold and the stake may compel the passive acquiescence of generation after generation, in the creed of a Church, or the dogmas of a priesthood; but such acquiescence of ignorance, or fear, or mental slavery, cannot be called the rational homage which the God of reason demands from his creatures. Persecution may command an outward conformity in worship, or an un-

<sup>5</sup> See on the whole of this subject, Warburton's reasoning in his *Alliance of Church and State*, book i.

reasoning agreement with the decisions of the influential; but it never can supply the place of the adoption of truth from conviction, and the pure and spiritual offering of an enlightened conscience and a subdued heart, which proceeds from enquiry and knowledge. Mere opinions are not actions; nor errors, sins; even if the supposed heretic be wrong. The mass of the decisions of councils and of doctors, of fathers and of controversialists, which every society of Christians, but especially that of the Church of Rome, has adopted as the basis of its belief, is so extensive, that doubts will arise in every mind when they are examined in detail, whether all and every one of them be worthy of unhesitating reception. Some may be dubious. Some may be wrong. On all accounts, therefore, the persecution which endeavours to enforce agreement in opinion by other means than sound argument and moral persuasion, is unreasonable and unnatural. It is tyranny and not justice. It does no good. It either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or it forces him into a self-tormenting dissatisfaction and sorrow in his intellectual and religious conclusions. It punishes sincerity; it persuades to hypocrisy; it destroys truth; it drives into error; it teaches man to dissemble, and be safe, but never to be honest and sincere. It is contrary to that best and only moral, spiritual, and intellectual happiness, which the one true religion was revealed in all ages to impart,—the happiness of thinking freely, deciding fairly, believing in its responsibility to God alone, as the implanter of conscience, and the giver of the ability to reason: and devoting the heart, the affections, and the life to Him in gratitude for the discoveries He has made in his revelation of Christ and his redemption; of the Holy Spirit, and his power; of man, and his destiny.

Much objection, however, has been sometimes alleged, even in modern times, against this doctrine of unlimited toleration. "Toleration," it is said, "produces indifference to or neglect of religion, from an abuse of Christian liberty. The public law allows the subject to violate Church union at pleasure. Is there no remedy for this evil? Ought any person to be permitted to separate himself from the episcopal communion in which he has been baptized, educated, and trained up, because he is misled to believe that the Episcopal Church is

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wrong in faith or unjust in its discipline? Though a Church may possibly err, is every individual the judge whether he is to depart from or remain in its communion? The authority of the Church, we answer, ought most undoubtedly to bind the consciences of its members, because caprice is not liberty, neither has any Christian the privilege to reject truth or to oppose ecclesiastical regulations not forbidden by revelation; but the question is, whether the Church ought to possess any other power over the unreasonable and foolish, who may reject its authority, than moral persuasion; and if it does not, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that the individual who resolves to become disobedient to its injunctions cannot, and ought not, to be prevented by any human tribunal from so acting. But this privilege only strengthens the duty of the Christian to remain in the communion of the Church. For the law of Christ to study union remains, though all the senates of the earth despised the solemn injunction. No man, therefore, is justified in leaving a Church from caprice, amusement, slight offence, or any worldly inferior personal motive. The only thing which justifies separation is the serious, deliberate conviction of an anxious conscience, that such separation is essential to the peace and salvation of the soul. He who leaves the communion of an Apostolic Church, does so at his peril before God. He who ventures to incur the penalty of that practical excommunication, which excludes him from the sacraments of a rightly constituted Church, and despises the word of the authorized teacher; is responsible to his Maker, though not to any human tribunal, for his decision. Such a man must take care that, like the Reformers who separated from the Church of Rome, when they were convinced of the errors of that Church; he be jealous over himself, that the Scriptures be his guide in all things; that he take the greatest care in his power to obtain the right interpretation of Scripture; that he pay a due regard to antiquity; that his prayer for aid and light from above be sincere and earnest; that his reasoning be free from every "partial purpose;" and that the salvation of the soul be with him the one thing needful. This was the conduct of the Reformers when they unwillingly commenced the war which still rages with the Church of Rome. Let a man so act, and the Church of England has nothing to fear. So long as that Church remains as it is, willing to be reformed

to the utmost, guided by Scripture, sanctioned by antiquity, deserving the love of the pious and devout, pure, free, tolerant, so long it will deserve and it will receive the homage and respect of a great and enlightened people. But the tendering of our affections to an institution which, by its virtues, may command them, does not interfere with our conviction, that Christ foresaw the time when the majority of people, and the Apostolical succession itself, would arrive at erroneous decisions; and, therefore, that while He instituted a form and mode of ecclesiastical government for his Church, He anticipated the period when the general apostasy would take place; and gave to all his people the general permission to be useful to each other; and the no less general command to all to meet for worship as the means of obtaining his blessing. He instituted the Apostolic government of his Churches, but He refused to disapprove of those who did good in his name, and were not found among their followers. Luke ix. 49. He declared, also, that his presence should be continued among his people, not only in the larger congregations of his Church, but where two or three were gathered together in his name. By the first of these laws He gave the proof Matt. xviii. 20. to the world, that the spiritual blessings of the religion of Christ are not limited to his own undoubted institutions. By the second, He gave the promise of his blessing to the Church, when its members should be scattered by persecution, or compelled by the conviction that the Churches of Christ had departed from the faith of the Gospel, to meet by twos and threes, or in the smallest numbers to worship, and to hope for, and to receive a blessing. Though Church authority is a valuable means of grace, yet the authority of every Church must rest its pretensions and its claims to homage upon its purity, rather than its antiquity. Christ gave to the conscience of each individual the power to judge. He gave authority also to his Church to direct. The conscience of the individual judges wrongly when he needlessly departs from the Church. It judges rightly when he follows its dictates, which compel him to seek, in consequence of its corruptions, either in the barn or in the cathedral, a purer creed and a wiser discipline. The two tribunals, the conscience of the individual, and the law of the Church, may seem to clash: but the only hope of our

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eventually arriving at that happy state of union which the Gospel seems to promise, must be, to give to each its apparently opposing rights to the very utmost. The authority of the Church may increase to its greatest height at the very moment when it suffers persecution. The authority of conscience, also, is increased in proportion as the Church, which should guide its judgment, gradually corrupts the truth. Both are divinely appointed to guide and control the people. Each individual will be judged according to the use he has made of his knowledge, opportunities, and circumstances. Christ Himself will be the judge of all; and He will approve or condemn with unerring, infallible justice. Here we must leave the question, repeating only the conclusion, which is the directory to both guides, that the conscience has no authority for wilfulness, and the Church has no power of persecution.

But if this view of the matter, it will be said, be correct, what then constitutes the crimes which are so repeatedly condemned in the inspired writings, as well as by every Church or society of Christians, whether small or great, which has ever yet been formed into a Church or congregation—the crimes of heresy and schism? In what do they consist, and how are they to be prevented?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Heresy is an opinion not sanctioned by revelation, though appearing to be justified by it and deduced from it.

Schism is a departure from the communion of those who maintain the opinions rightly sanctioned by revelation.—Burton on Heresy, p. 8.

Heresy is that spiritual offence which consists in adopting and promulgating an opinion or conclusion from revelation, which the Scriptures do not sanction, and which the Catholic Church condemns. It is individual perverseness leading to religious dissension. It is an error destroying the peace and happiness which result from adherence to truth. As a spiritual offence, its punishment must be left to the Author of Revelation. As a source of dissension among Churches, it must be punished upon earth by the decision of the Church, which condemns it, and by the expulsion of the offender from its communion. This, as we have said, is the sole punishment which human beings have the right to inflict

on those guilty of the crime; and that punishment ought strictly to be confined to the non-estimation of the heretic as a brother Christian. "A man that is an heretic after the first or second admonition, reject from your society." The rule is a law of every Church. It is the only law, and it is clearly laid down as such by the principal teacher of the early Churches.

Heresy may be defined to be an opinion contrary to Scripture, as interpreted by the three first centuries, and sanctioned by the decisions of the four first General Councils of the Church. Heresy may be involuntary or voluntary. It is involuntary when it proceeds from ignorance arising from deficient evidence or insufficient conviction. It is voluntary when it is maintained by pride of heart contrary to conviction, but desiring either victory or distinction.

Hole defines heresy to be a denial of the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith, maintained in spite of

What then is schism? Schism is different from heresy in this respect; it is the needless separation of one or many individuals by their own choice from the general body of the Church<sup>7</sup>; and this schism is undoubtedly severely condemned by the inspired and authorized founders of the early Christian communions<sup>8</sup>. The reason of such condemnation is evident. Agreement in religious opinions is the first bond of that union of affection which was so much admired among the primitive believers. The laws which censure schism, and which so strongly admonish the members of the early Churches against it, are also still binding upon every Christian, where the Church to which he is united has not departed from the faith of its founders, Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

Envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, are sins of the heart, though society cannot punish them; but the omission of such punishment does not justify their indulgence. So it is with heresy and schism, with foolish or erroneous opinions, needless separations, and capricious oppositions to the Church. They are spiritual crimes. Man cannot punish them; but they do not, therefore, cease to be evils. Toleration is forced upon Churches and communities by the experience of the past; but the very word "toleration" implies, that the object of such toleration is a crime of which policy, justice, or the possibility of our own being in error, demand the forbearing of the penalty. To depart unnecessarily from a true Church is a great spiritual offence. In the first centuries especially, when the Churches remained stedfast in the faith and discipline of the Apostles, when all was union upon the foundation of charity, purity, and truth, schism as well as heresy was an unjustifiable sin. Every person in the present day who separates from caprice, or fancy, or folly, from the communion of a true, spiritual, useful Church, commits the same spiritual crime: but the very general apostasy of the Apostolic succession has rendered every Church a fit object of just

means of better information, and with persevering malignity.

A man that is a heretic reject. He is condemned, being subverted in his own mind.—See Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*—On Heresy.

<sup>7</sup> According to S. Basil, it is dissension arising from causes which are

ecclesiastical, and admit of being healed.—Epist. Canon i. ad Amphiloeh. p. 578. See further, Forbesii *Instit. Theolog. lib. xiv. cap. 1.*

<sup>8</sup> St. Chrysostom, especially in his eleventh Homily upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, enlarges upon the enormity of the sin of schism.

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enquiry and examination to every Christian who is enabled to read or think; and the conscience of every believer in Scripture must be the judge of his own guide, the Church, as every client is the judge of the merits of his own lawyer, or every sick man the judge of his own physician. A wise man will depend both on his lawyer and physician, and yield to their authority; but he will not so yield to their decisions as to resign his own reason when he has sufficient cause to conclude that they are in error.

The Reformation renewed to all Christians that great charter which Christ Himself gave to the world, that the persons to whom his Gospel came should judge of its truth by evidence, and not by ecclesiastical authority only; and I believe, and therefore I express my belief, that the Son of God knew the whole history of his Church, and foresaw the time when the successors of his Apostles in the new Church, like the successors of his prophets in the older Church, would fall from the truth; would teach doctrines which were indefensible, and would sanction and defend those doctrines by enactments which were unjust, unrighteous, and cruel; and which became, therefore, gradually to be insupportable. I believe, therefore, that Christ has provided in his Church a remedy for this wrong; and that as the doctrines of Popery are the worst heresy, and the usurpation of Popery the worst schism in the universal Church, Christ, while He appointed an Apostolic succession of teachers to rule, and of teachers who were not to rule till they were empowered to do so; gave also, at the very same time, unlimited freedom of conscience, choice, and reasoning, that truth might never perish; and it is for us to reconcile these things, and give to each truth its place. Christ foresaw the time when Episcopal Churches should err, and Apostolic pastors be deceived; when spiritual religion, unless it was identified with a mass of cold ritual, would be a reproach to the Churches themselves; when the invisible Church would be driven to the wilderness of its solitudes and retirements, for the streams and fountains of the waters of life; instead of finding them in the barren pastures of the visible fold of Christ, where the shepherds had become wolves, and the sheep that did not flee were only the victims and the prey. Christ foresaw, and by his Spirit He foretold to the Church, the desolation of the twelve

hundred and sixty years, when the dominant influence in his Church should be detrimental to his own spiritual power. He foresaw the times which our own eyes have beheld, when infidelity should so sweep away the external Christianity from a neighbouring country, that if any remained to worship Christ, they must gather together by twos and threes in his name. He foresaw the days when millions of the human race should expatriate themselves from their native homes, and go into the unpeopled forests, and prairies, and wastes, and plains of a mighty continent ; where there should be no bishop to rule, no teacher to instruct, no Church in which to worship ; and where the moral darkness could only be pierced by the faith which welcomed the promise, that the presence of Christ should be with the few as well as with the many ; with the praying family as well as with the noblest institution. We may believe and trust that it shall be in America and elsewhere, that the scattered families who thus may meet in the name of the Omnipotent Christ, may be the germ of extensive Churches and useful episcopal communions, as it was in the days of the scattered converts of the persecuted Church at Jerusalem. To establish such Churches is commanded as a duty, to uphold them is a privilege, to depart from them is a sin : but what delight, and joy, and comfort has been granted from this declaration of our common Lord, that where two or three met together, He was there, to thousands and millions of his people, in those fearful days ; when separation itself was a duty, and when remaining in Christ's own visible Church was too often a spiritual reproach to the conscience, and a sin against the truth itself ! How refreshing was the Scripture to the soul, when, though the very successors of the Apostles gave their sanction to the worship of images, and other indefensible errors, the voice of the Apocalypse spake from the holy page, Come out of the visible Church, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues ! So it is that the liberty of conscience, which Christ has not only permitted, but commanded, though it may in some instances, for certain times, oppose the useful and the good ; was at the beginning the best foundation of the love of the people for the Apostolic institutions of the religion of Jesus ; and so we may believe it will be again, if all Chris-

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tians will consent to abandon the doctrine of persecution, and to make their appeals to the conscience and to the reason of their fellows; by demonstrating that the institutions by which Christ and his Apostles address the conscience, recommend themselves to the reason also, as most useful, and most capable of promoting the happiness, the liberty, and the spiritual religion of mankind.

These considerations, then, on the authority of Churches over the conscience, and the authority of conscience over the decisions, opinions, and actions of the Christian, will enable us to understand what is meant by the perverted term PERSECUTION. On our rightly defining and comprehending this word will depend much of the argument in the following pages.

Persecution, then, that is, religious persecution, or persecution for religion, is the infliction of a greater penalty for holding or teaching opinions which are offensive to the majority of a Church, or are considered erroneous, than is commanded by the founder of Christianity. Persecution is the attempt also to produce or compel conformity of opinion by force, fraud, law, violence, or motives of any kind but those which are founded upon moral persuasion or religious argument. Persecution is the infliction of any punishment whatever by the civil magistrate upon the holders or teachers of religious opinions, when those opinions are neither productive of immorality, nor in any way detrimental to the society, or to the magistrate which condemns them. Persecution is the interference of either ecclesiastical or civil law between God and the conscience of the individual, in any other way than the laws of morality require. It is the enforcing spiritual duty by other than spiritual sanction, and blending together the motives which Christianity, rightly understood, has wisely and justly separated.

This definition of persecution is certainly very much, at first sight at least, open to great objection. Holding opinions, it will be said by many, contrary to the decisions of the Church, is inflicting injury both upon society by causing strifes and divisions; and upon the holder of such opinions himself by permitting him to continue, if he be not prevented, in a wrong faith. He is himself injured, because

one principal object of all revealed religion, as every society of Christians, without any exception, has taught, BOOK I.  
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whom they condemned, to reconsider, retract, or urge again upon their notice the truth or error he had espoused; and thus give ample security for the eventual rejection of every error, or adoption of every truth, which the judicious or injudicious might submit to their brethren. It would do, and it has done all this by maintaining authority, allowing discussion, approving truth, and condemning error; without needless censure, or the command to inflict any penalty which could be called persecution for opinion.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### *On the Nature and Limits of the Influence of the Civil Power.*

IF excommunication, whether of the lesser kind, by depriving men of the sacraments; or of the greater kind, by depriving them of the society and conversation of the faithful; be the only punishment which the Church can either command or inflict; and if that censure may be despised with impunity, what is the duty of the magistrate in matters of religion? If morality be the basis of the best security for the protection of the peace, safety, property, and happiness of the people; and if religion, or regard for the sanctions of revelation, be the foundation of that morality, is it not the duty of the magistrate, from regard to the public good, to endeavour to take care that religion flourish in the community? Neither on this account only is it the duty of the ruler, or legislator, to interfere in these things. The testimony of the past declares, that ecclesiastical excommunication has been made the source of hatreds, dissensions, and bloodshed. The spiritual authority of a priesthood might be perverted, and has been perverted, if history speaks truth, to the production of evils which have degraded the civil magistrate below the priesthood, excited nations to war, and inflicted intolerable calamities upon individuals. The authority of spiritual societies has been exercised to encourage immorality; and the annals of every nation have abounded with complaints against the injurious influence of those, who, using the words of God, or

conscience, or religion, or the Church, or the cause of religious liberty as their apology, have disturbed the public peace, and overthrown the best interests of society. As the greatest miseries which a people has ever endured were once inflicted upon a nation in the names of equality and liberty; so have the most disastrous results to human happiness at all times proceeded from the mere spiritual hatred borne by various spiritual societies against those either of their own community, who wish to separate from them; or against those who were not of their community; but over whom a supreme spiritual authority was claimed. Is the magistrate to be prevented by the fear of being considered a persecutor, from providing for the good of the community; and thus preventing the civil, political, and moral evils, which result from the perversion of the influence of a spiritual society?

The magistrate, the head of the state or legislature, in every nation is not only the civil, but he is, in one sense, the ecclesiastical ruler of the people at all times, and in all nations; even in those where the ecclesiastical authority is most expressly and positively abjured. That he is the civil ruler is allowed by all; that he is the ecclesiastical ruler is allowed with various modifications and explanations, according to the circumstances of each community. In no country, for instance, would a priesthood be permitted to inculcate, with impunity, the lawfulness of murder, the innocence of theft, or the legality of sedition and rebellion. If it could be proved that these evils uniformly resulted from the teaching of principles which do not at first sight enforce such crimes; that uniformity of evil would justify the civil magistrate in prohibiting the inculcation of such opinions. If excommunication, for instance, were to be followed in America, with burning a citizen at the stake, or with the demolition of his house by the people; and if these burnings or demolitions were so to be defended by one party, and so to be revenged by another, that the States of America were in danger of civil war, and of a great loss of property and life; the magistrate would be justified, not merely in preventing the consequences of the teaching, or excommunication, he would do right to prevent the teaching itself which had so uniformly led to these disasters. The punishment which he might inflict to prevent the crime, if it were only so much as would

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be sufficient to restrain its commission, could not be called persecution, even though it would be named by many, the punishment of a mere spiritual offence. The same mode of repressing this kind of injury to society would be adopted in the nations where the legislature is founded on the most extreme and opposite principles to those of the United States. If the pronouncing the sentence of excommunication in Spain, instead of leading only to the quiet submission of the individual, and to his being burned without resistance at the stake, were to tend to universal riot and bloodshed, so that the people were ready to wage civil war with each other; then the legislature of Spain, if that war began and proceeded, would be compelled, for the mere preservation of the political existence of the nation, to prevent the repetition of the evil. The mere spiritual offence, as it appears at first sight to be, would be prevented or remedied, by the magistrate, for the sake of the public good; and there must, therefore, be in every legislature an express, or an implied ecclesiastical power, to remedy the bad effects of the exertion of any spiritual authority. Even in the nations where the authority of the magistrate and the priest are vested in one person, the power of the priest must become merged in that of the magistrate; when the exercise of the mere spiritual authority would destroy the community over which he rules.

The duty of the magistrate, therefore, in matters of religion is twofold; he is to prevent the injuries resulting to society from the perversion of religious opinions, by never permitting the public peace to be destroyed, nor the public morality to be injured, by the teaching of any church, society, or party. Thus Constantine was justified in abolishing the gladiatorial fights, the cruel sacrifices, and the infamous worship of the Paphian goddess, in spite of the declarations of the priesthood of Venus. He would not be subject to the charge of persecution for so doing; yet if he had inflicted greater punishment than had been necessary to have prevented the evil, he had been justly charged with the guilt of this crime. The next duty of the magistrate is the usual well known principle, to establish the morality, virtue, peace, and laws of the community, upon the basis of the most powerful motive which can influence his people to the discharge of every duty securing these great objects; and promoting the general

happiness. This basis is religion<sup>1</sup>, and the mode in which the state or magistrate may order the presenting religion to the approbation of the people, must vary according to the existing circumstances, passions, dispositions, or divisions of the people. Nothing can be done usefully which perpetually violates the public peace, and produces hatred and factions instead of harmony and repose. The duty of his endeavour for the sake of both the present and future welfare of his people, to procure the permanent influence of religion on the lives, hearts, affections, and consciences of the community, will ever remain unchangeable. No less unchangeable, too, remains that highest duty to the magistrate as a religious man, or to the legislature as a body of religious persons, to advance the glory of God, the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and the universal diffusion of the Gospel in charity to the souls of men. The office of bearing rule among a people does not extinguish the private duty of a Christian senator, sovereign, nor legislature; but the magistrate, in the exercise of his authority, must consider his subjects as they are, and not as they ought to be; and in attempting to make them the latter, he must act with wisdom and caution. His mode, therefore, in effecting the great object of promoting the improvement and happiness of his people, will vary with opportunities, circumstances, and times; and according to these, he will recommend, protect, sanction, and establish religion. The time will come when Christianity, in its best and purest form, both of discipline and doctrine, will prevail. May God's kingdom soon come, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

In the meantime three several modes of placing public morality on the basis of religion have been adopted by the civilized nations of mankind; all three of which may be said

<sup>1</sup> I meet with a remark in Montesquieu which is not quite consistent with the sound judgment generally displayed in his noble work. "The ideas which I bring from religion," he observes, "ought not always to serve as the first principle to the civil laws, because the laws of perfection, derived from religion, have in view the goodness of the individual; the civil laws have in view the moral goodness of men in general."—Montesquieu's Spirit

of Laws, book xxvi. chap. ix. p. 356.

But surely the learned writer ought to have perceived, that the reformation of individuals (society in general being made up of individuals) would be the reformation of the whole mass. If religion makes individuals good, it renders all society better, and the magistrate, therefore, must make religion the foundation of the civil law, if he hopes to promote the good of the whole commonwealth.

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to be the result and consequence of the various events of the history which we are about to survey. It may be advisable, therefore, briefly to glance at each, as some knowledge of the differing systems of policy may be necessary to the right appreciation of the reflections with which I shall conclude this first book. These three systems may be described as—the *establishment of religion without the principle of toleration*—the *establishment of religion with the permission of toleration*, not as a matter of necessity, but as an act of justice and duty,—and the *establishment of toleration only*,—without any enforcement, recommendation, notice, or sanction by the legislature; of any peculiar Church, mode of worship, or system of religious belief.

The first plan—that of *founding the morality of a country on the basis of religion, without admitting toleration* to be a right which the people may claim, and a principle, therefore, which a government should concede, is that which is adopted by the Church of Rome. Claiming to be infallible and supreme, and therefore in some measure to be Divine, the toleration it allows is a matter of necessity alone. On the continent its priesthood rule the rulers. The declarations of its bishops and ministers in this empire have professed, in guarded and suspicious language, to have abandoned the doctrines of punishing the body for the good of the soul; but the canons which command and enforce the worst severities have not yet been rescinded<sup>2</sup>. The *dominium altum*, by which the head of the Church may decree the non-observance of any engagement, law, promise, or vow, has not been done away; and if the changes which are constantly occurring among the nations of Europe were again to give unlimited authority and power to the Church of Rome, those nations possess no guarantee against the revival of the most severe enactments of the ages before the Reformation. Influenced by the example of England, by the acquiescence of its people, and by the general indifference to spiritual religion, which characterizes so miserably and so universally the nations of Europe at present; it does not execute the unrepealed and obnoxious canons which were once enforced with the unsparing and relentless rigour so elaborately related by Foxe

<sup>2</sup> "The laws in Rome's dread canon still conceal'd,  
Through weakness obsolete, yet unrepeal'd."

the martyrologist. Yet no alteration in the theory of its policy has taken place. Unchanged and unchangeable, it yields no pretensions, submits to no improvement, rejects no error, repeals no law. Dominant still in those countries which resisted the influence of the great movement in the ages of Luther and Cranmer, (when so many nations expunged from their creeds the additions of the centuries immediately preceding them; and when the bishops of England, with their clergy, convocation, and universities, almost unanimously declared, that the Bishop of Rome could claim no other power among us from reason, Scripture, or antiquity, than any other foreign bishop,) the Church of Rome, learning no lesson from the revolvers, still maintains its infallibility, and therefore denies toleration to its people as an inalienable privilege and right. It is unwilling to perceive, that the toleration of those who differ from its decisions would be attended with most useful results. The mind of man is always active. Knowledge is always progressive. Even the criticism of Scripture has been much improved; and, therefore, new interpretations, which the fathers could not have known, have been rightly given to various passages by the aid of the publications of scholars, travellers, and students. But where the Church has decided, and the state has resolved, that such previous decisions be law, that no new interpretation be received, no new opinion be tolerated; then all religious knowledge is stationary; the mind loses its activity; the energy, which might have displayed itself in theological enquiries, being repressed systematically among a whole people, ceases to exist; the very arts languish; commerce itself, which is the offspring of energy as much as of necessity, pines away; and greatness of mind and character disappear. This has been the case with the southern countries of Europe. Three hundred years ago Italy and Spain abounded with the fruits of the great moral and religious revival of knowledge and learning which characterized the age of the Reformation. Of Spain, more especially, it was said, that the sun never set on its dominions. It commanded the greatest wealth, enjoyed the most enlarged commerce, sent out against its rival the mightiest fleet that ever swept the seas; but it burnt out with the fires of its persecutions those supposed heresies<sup>3</sup> which

<sup>3</sup> See the work of Dr. McCree upon this subject.

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were the result of the love of truth, giving energy and health to the long depressed mind of Spain; and with them it extinguished the spirit, the enterprise, and the activity which would have maintained its national greatness, and preserved its rank among the nations. The establishment of a religion which knows no toleration, prevents the possibility of spiritual improvement, and, therefore, of the highest happiness. The storms are extinguished, but the ocean becomes stagnant. It may give peace, but it is at the expence of truth and of mental advancement. The humbling spectacle of Galileo, in the dungeons of the inquisition, is the best illustration of establishment without toleration. The establishment was stationary. Toleration allowed progressive improvement. Science was advanced by the mental energy which a stationary establishment immediately repressed; and, as the mind of the philosopher was compelled to limit its activity, or to confine its energy, so also the national mind of a whole people may be cabined, cribbed, confined, if it be subjected to intolerant laws, saying to every effort of genius, learning, and curiosity, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further; and here, within the decisions of the priesthood of the age, shall thy proud waves be stayed." One age cannot legislate wholly and entirely for another; and establishment, without toleration, therefore, after a few centuries, endangers the very existence of the religion; and with the religion, the happiness, the peace, and the morality of the nation it professes to benefit. If the mind doubt the truth of the national creed, and may not express its doubts, it becomes first infidel, then reckless; and the whole political and religious polity of the state is endangered or destroyed. The experience of the last half century has shown the truth of this assertion in the histories of France and of Spain; and given thereby a lesson to the world, that the establishment of any unchanging creed, without toleration, is not the best, because it cannot be the permanent foundation, of morality, peace, and happiness.

The second mode by which the magistrate may found the public security of the community upon the basis of religion, is that which has so long prevailed in our own country—the union of an established form of worship, with an unlimited toleration of those opinions, which are neither destructive to

morality nor injurious to society. Though the people of England formerly preferred, and do still prefer the union of an establishment with toleration to any other mode of securing the public peace; and though the Episcopal Church has been declared in four great national settlements of religious and political divisions to be the choice of all classes, as well as those in authority; yet because there has been much opposition to its influence, and much error respecting its claims to the approbation of the people, it may be well very briefly to compare its pretensions as to antiquity and usefulness, with those other societies which have formerly been for a short time established, but which are now only tolerated among us.

Presbyterianism originated in the following circumstances. Balma, the Bishop of Geneva, in the month of July, in the year 1533, two years before the commencement of the Reformation, fled from his flock in that city in consequence of the political disputes between the people of Geneva and the Duke of Savoy. Up to that time the ecclesiastical government had been episcopal. Two years after his secession, the people generally embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. In the year 1537, the Duke of Savoy, anxious to restore peace, sent an ambassador to the Genevans, promising them certain privileges and advantages if they would forsake the Reformation, and again receive their bishop. They returned, for answer, that their bishop should be welcomed if he would do the work of a bishop according to the word of God; but they would obey God rather than man, and would not return to their ancient superstitions<sup>4</sup>. Geneva, therefore, at the commencement of its embracing the purer faith, did not wish to reject Episcopacy. The fault was in the refusal of the bishop to return to his people. About this time the celebrated John Calvin,

<sup>4</sup> Hooker, in the preface to his great work, thinks it impossible that the Genevans could have appointed another bishop in the place of Balma, probably because the ancient Canon would have been broken, which decreed that two bishops were never to be set apart to one city. Durell objects to this opinion of Hooker, and condemns them for omitting this duty. If they had done so, how many

thousands of lives, and how much bitter heart-burnings, would have been spared to the world. Human laws may not punish schism, because they thus introduce worse evils; but these incidents prove its guilt before God. He wills the happiness of his creatures: schism produces the hatreds which destroy it.

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leaving France, arrived at Geneva. The government of the city was now exclusively popular; but every thing was in a very unsettled state. Calvin, who had been made reader in divinity among them, and who was distinguished as a preacher, though he had no abstract objection to Episcopacy<sup>5</sup>, persuaded the people to bind themselves by a solemn oath never to admit Popery again; and then to obey such laws concerning discipline and doctrine in religion as himself, Farel, and some other persons then engaged in preaching at Geneva, should submit to them for the general benefit. The plan he gave them rejected Episcopacy. The supposed necessity of the case was considered as his justification, for both he and Beza apologized for this unusual measure; and pronounced those to be schismatics who would not submit to bishops who were subject to the laws of Christ. After rejecting Episcopacy, he proceeded to frame the polity which is called Presbyterian, because it consigns the government of Christian societies to Presbyters. The doctrines taught by Presbyterianism, (with the exception of making the Scriptural revelation of the truth of election, predestination, and reprobation a system, instead of a series of propositions, which are consistent with other truths, apparently, at first sight, opposed to them; and some other minor points,) are nearly the same as those which are taught by the Church of England. Very remarkable is the progress of a defence of a doubtful proposition when it has been once taught by an

<sup>5</sup> What great events, from slightest causes, spring! Those in England who wished for a more perfect form of Liturgy, applied to Calvin to learn his opinion of the Prayer Book which had been compiled with so much diligence. They did not send him a copy of the book; he, therefore, gave them his opinion from their own statement of the case. In the English Liturgy, he observes, according to your account of its contents, I perceive there are many things which I consider not quite worthy of approbation; but still such as ought not to excite either dissension or opposition. This expression may be regarded as the small fountain whence flowed those waters of bitterness which overwhelmed the Church, and which have not yet subsided.

The well known expression of Calvin

is:—In Anglicana Liturgia qualem describitis, multas video fuisse tolerabiles ineptias. I have paraphrased the two last words according to the criticisms of Durell in his work, "The Reformed Church of England not condemned by any other Reformed Churches," pp. 176—184. It must be observed, that the account of the troubles of Frankfort, (which is generally considered the best narrative of the events which prevented John Fox, I am sorry to say, and many others from properly appreciating the Prayer Book,) omits the words *qualem describitis*; upon which, however, the whole weight of Calvin's opinion may be said to depend.—See the numerous references from Calvin's Works, in Durell, in the treatise just mentioned.

ambitious, a learned, or an influential teacher. Calvin and Beza at first defended their system with excuses for their deviating from antiquity. In the year 1560, their mode of Church rule was introduced into Scotland, excepting, that John Knox also proposed the government of the Church by superintendents, who, without the title of bishop, exercised nearly their whole power. Fourteen years after, bishops were decreed to be only pastors of single congregations; and in six years more, Episcopacy was declared in Scotland to be both unlawful and unscriptural. The civil war broke out in England. The discussions respecting Church government rendered the two parties irreconcilable. Four years before the murder of the king, Presbyterianism was voted by the Assembly of Divines, in London, to be the Divine right form of Church government; and, in the year of his death, it was fully established in England, as it had been in Scotland, the religion of the state. This mode of professing Christianity requires, but does not possess, the sanction of antiquity and primitive order. The necessity on which it was originally justified has now ceased. Episcopacy has become tolerant, and is willing to reconsider all the sources of the divisions which separate Christian from Christian; and we may justly hope, therefore, whatever be the present appearances to the contrary, that the absence of persecution and the love of truth may finally destroy the Genevan innovation, and promote that union which can only be founded on the adoption of that primitive plan of Church government which was common to all Churches, till the flight of Balma from Geneva.

The Independents arose about the time when the discussions were most animated between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The first Independent, or Congregational Church, is said to have been formed in the year 1616. The Independents are now generally called Dissenters. The term Dissenting Brethren was first given to six members of the Assembly of Divines who objected to the Presbyterian, and espoused the Independent form of worship and government. This eventually large party did not materially differ in the doctrines they taught, from either of their predecessors. They soon became influential, and though they cannot be said to have established their Church polity, as this would have been contrary

to their avowed opinions ; the leading men of the state are said to have espoused their notions. They have never been united to the state. They profess to believe that every separate congregation of Christians is a Christian Church, possessing within itself every power necessary for its government, for the formation of opinions, and for the maintenance of discipline ; whether as to the choice of teachers, the superintendence of the members of its communion, or any other point requiring the decision of a Church. The Independent Churches are founded not so much on inferences from Scripture, or examples from antiquity, as on arguments deduced from what they would believe to be the philosophy and reasonableness of their conclusions, and the conviction that their polity is not opposed to the revealed will of God <sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Though the Independents or Dissenters are still very numerous, there is reason to believe that their religious influence, in spite of their zeal and activity, is rapidly declining. Two centuries ago they were so powerful, that they could divide our peers, govern the people, and murder a king. They were then honoured as the spiritual men of the nation. They dissolved the charm by the possession and the abuse of secular authority. From that moment their influence has declined. An act of foolish revenge, in the year 1662, on the part of those whom they had most deeply offended, restored to them, in spite of their faults, much homage from the commonalty, who gave them honour as sufferers for conscience sake. The state enacted a law which banished them and the Presbyterians from the Church, when they were deprived of the power of inflicting further injury, instead of ordaining, that after the departure of the existing generation, none should be admitted to be preachers without episcopal ordination. This act gave back to the Dissenters much influence ; and that influence was increased by the eloquent teacher who appeared among us in the last century. This, too, however, has gone. The Dissenters have debased and degraded their high name, as sufferers for conscience sake, by mingling with the lowest and the basest of the political opponents of peace and order. They have preferred liberty to religion, toleration to truth, freedom to spirituality.

Much good they have done to the Church of God among heathen tribes, by preparing the way for the better forms of Christianity ; but they have no discipline whereby to preserve union. The doctrines of the Gospel, which they do teach, are taught with equal purity by the Episcopal Church, which, in the name of Christ, they still love to oppose. The very object for which the Providence of God permitted them to be once so influential, has been accomplished in the increasing zeal, activity, spiritual-mindedness, and success of the Church. The river of their orthodoxy, as to their steadfastness in maintaining the mysteries of their religion in the Trinity and the Atonement, is being rapidly lost in the marshes and mire of the Socinian Deism of the day ; and nothing will remain of them in a century but a number of harmless sects, which shall each be to the other as the Ishmaelites of Christianity. Their hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against them ; and thus shall they live on in the presence of all their brethren an annoyance, a warning, and a reproach. They have blended themselves with the world. They have loved the praise of the worst enemies of the Church more than the praise of God ; and the glory has departed from the pseudo-ark of their Israel. I express this opinion after a careful study of the best work on Congregational Churches, Dr. John Owen's celebrated Treatise on the true Nature of a Gospel

The next great Christian Church, or society, which claims the attention of the magistrate, is the Church of England. This also preaches toleration, while it still claims the homage of the people to its usefulness, antiquity, and purity. The Episcopal Church of England, like the Episcopal Churches in Scotland, America, and the East, professes to be founded upon the institution, by our Saviour, of the Apostolic office. It affirms that the Apostle was not only a teacher, but that he was a ruler also; that the Apostles were succeeded in their office of ruler, as well as in their office of teacher, by the first fruits of their converts, who declined the title Apostle, and assumed that of Bishop; which had at first been common with that of Elder or Presbyter, the second order of instructors, who had authority to teach, but not to govern the several congregations of which the larger society or Church was composed. It considers, though it does not affirm, that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles in the power of ruling; and that the three several orders of bishop, priest, and deacon, are essential to the composition or right formation of a Christian Church; and that no united society of Christians is entitled to that name, unless they are bound together by the government of the bishop, who shall ordain, or give authority to the Presbyter to teach; and shall ordain, also, the minister or deacon, to assist him in his sacred duty. The Episcopal Church has been generally united to the state from the time when the state ceased to be an integral portion of the papacy, and to acknowledge any longer the authority of the see of Rome. Four several national recognitions of its fitness to be the foundation on which the public morality should repose, have been made in the history of the past. It first became the National Church in the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>7</sup>

Church and its Government.—In the preface to that work, he affirms, that though the Jewish Church was national, it was still congregational. He is right, but it was not congregational in this sense, that it ceased to be national, and that every separate congregation might form its own creed.

<sup>7</sup> The king, by whose means the first blow against Rome was given by the legislature in compliance with the will of the people, behaved most in-

famously. "The *ruthless, jealous tyrant*," by instituting commissions as instruments of unjust conduct, avoided responsibility, and confiscated to laymen the revenues of the Church, the patrimony of the poor, the resources of the sick, and the funds which had been intended for national education. The restoration of the parochial property from the laymen to the parishes would be the greatest improvement and reformation which a statesman could

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when the yoke of the Papacy was broken. It was regarded as the representative of the ancient discipline of the Universal Church, and was venerated for its antiquity and usefulness.—It was next adopted as the choice of the people after the second rejection of Popery, at the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth. At that time, indeed, the only two rivals for the favour of the national legislature were the Papacy and Episcopacy. It was then as it will again be. The contest for the obedience of the thoughtful lay only between the corruptions and the reform of antiquity.—The third solemn acceptance of Episcopacy, as the most preferable form of ecclesiastical polity, by the senate, sovereign, and people of England, occurred after Presbyterianism had for a short hour superseded its elder sister, and had been itself displaced by Independency. The people were offended and disgusted at such things as the absurdity of omitting the Lord's Prayer in a directory for public worship, at proscribing the use of the Common Prayer Book, and many other faults, which are now lamented and regretted by the admirers of this rejected mode of discipline, and religious instruction.—The fourth great national act of preferring Episcopacy to Papacy, or to its more modern opponents, took place at the period of the events which completed and perfected the Reformation, the Revolution of 1688. At that time the king was a Papist, and a great portion of his people were Presbyterians or Independents. The northern part of the empire having, in hatred of Papacy, identified Popery with Episcopacy, and having been rendered indignant and irritated by the manner in which the laws, which enacted the prevalence of Episcopacy, had been enforced; resolved to throw off the dominion of the bishops of Scotland altogether. The consequence of their resolution has been, that in that

propose or effect. This is the great cause of the poverty of the Church at present. The proposed remedy, how-

ever, now is to plunder the remainder, because the former havoc has produced inequality.

“Thou ruthless, jealous tyrant! Heaven repay  
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,  
The wild caprice of thy tyrannic sway;  
The gory-bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,  
The murder'd Surrey's blood, and tears of Geraldine.”

*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

part of the empire Presbyterianism is established, while Episcopacy is but tolerated. The English people were more cautious, and retaining Episcopacy, tolerated Presbyterianism and Independency. The Church of England is principally supported by the voluntary system, because its revenues were granted as free gifts by individuals after the occupation of the country by our Saxon ancestors. The public law only secures the payment of those voluntary revenues, as it secures the rent to the landlord, and the endowment of a meeting-house, or the grant to a Roman Catholic chapel. Our cathedrals and churches were freely and voluntarily endowed by the people, and not by the state, before the Norman Conquest; and the small contributions required for the fabrics of the Churches, and the expenses of public worship, are demanded, not for the sake of the minister, but for the benefit of the poorer worshippers, and therefore of the whole community; and there is no greater injustice in requiring the infidel to pay for the charges of worship, than there is in requiring a blind man to contribute to the gas lights of his parish. The Episcopal Church of England unites the discipline of Presbyterianism with the freedom of Independency. It is as orthodox as both in defending the great doctrines of Christianity. It grants toleration as extensively as either. It possesses, therefore, every claim to the favour of the magistrate, which its opponents propose, to recommend their polity to the people. In addition to these, it pleads its antiquity, its spiritual authority as the administrator of the sacraments, and as the interpreter, or as the best assistant to the interpretation of Scripture. Its succession of bishops is as certain as that of Rome<sup>8</sup>. It possesses, as a Christian Church, by its purity of faith, Apostolic authority, and primitive discipline, the three criteria by which every Christian society must be judged, and it thus obtains the approbation of the thoughtful and conscientious. Its faith is such, that while it has decided fully and clearly on the chief points of doctrine, which have been discussed and controverted through fifteen centuries; it still, conscious of the justice of its conclusions,

<sup>8</sup> I am not ignorant of the Nag's Head controversy, but I shall only repeat my affirmation—our succession is as certain as that of Rome.

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encourages to the utmost the extension of Scripture, and unlimited freedom of enquiry. While it upholds truth, it demands to be freely examined and judged by all; and thus it promotes, by its forbearance and moderation, its mildness and patience; peace, quietness, and piety. While it thus claims authority to teach, and gives liberty to enquire, it resigns all power to coerce. It accomplishes all that the magistrate or the state can demand of a religious establishment, for it protects morality, and avoids persecution.

Bellarmino, in his endeavour to prove the Church of Rome to be the only true Church, has given fifteen marks or notes, as they are called, by which the Catholic Church may be distinguished from all others. These marks are perfectly characteristic of Episcopacy, though not agreeable to Papacy. The first mark of the Church of Christ is, that it is *catholic*, or universal. For fifteen centuries Episcopacy was the universal discipline, of which the Bishop of Rome, by gradual usurpation, declared himself to be the visible head. The second mark is *antiquity*, and the third *duration*. Episcopacy is as old as the Apostolic institution, of which it is a continuance only, and it has lasted to the present day, and it will last till Christ comes to judgment. *Amplitude, the succession of bishops, and consent in doctrine with the ancient Church*, follow in the order I have named them. All describe Episcopacy as the most extensive in dominion, deriving its authority from the Apostolic succession alone; and studying, as in England, Scotland, and America, to be conformed in all useful and important things, with the customs of the first six centuries, and with the conclusions of the first four General Councils. *Union of the members with themselves, and with Christ their head*, is peculiarly characteristic of the Episcopal Churches, which have never since the Reformation differed with each other; and which are the only bodies that have maintained the internal or spiritual unity with the external and disciplinary, founded upon antiquity and Scripture, consistent with the good order of society, and eminent for usefulness in promoting peace and goodwill among all classes of its communion. *Sanctity of doctrine* has characterized the Episcopal Churches ever since their departure from the

errors of their sister, Rome. The Atonement, the Divinity of Christ, and the necessity of the continued influences of the Holy Spirit, have been interwoven with their articles, creeds, and liturgies ; so that the formularies of the Anglican Episcopal Churches have long been the standard to all sects and parties, which, having none of their own, are anxious to plead an authority for their conclusions, though they resolve to find some fault with their source. *The general reception of its doctrine*—the ninth supposed mark of the true Church—may well be given to the Church of England, when every orthodox Christian refers to its articles as the best compendium of inferences from the common revelation. *The holy lives of the heads of the Church* may be no less safely claimed as the tenth mark of our trueness ; and though we do not profess *to work miracles*, and thus to assume the eleventh token that we are a true Church of God, I do not hesitate to affirm, that we have wrought more miracles than Rome itself, in preserving the truth and purity of our creeds from the blandishments of novelty, while we permit real improvement ; and we are no less free from the corruptions of antiquity while we venerate the ancient observances, which are either useful, simple, or decorous. *The spirit of prophecy*, the next mark of the Church, rests upon us as it rested upon the servants of God in the olden time ; not, indeed, in the prediction of future events—that part of the former dispensations is provided for in the Christian Church by the mysterious Book of the Apocalypse—but by the constant succession of bold, zealous, energetic, yet sober-minded preachers, who have been and are the best instructors of the world ; and that leaven of the mass of mankind, which has preserved the heap from the putrefaction of infidelity, apostasy, and vice. *The confession of adversaries, the tragical end of enemies, and temporal prosperity*, are the three last notes by which the true Church recommends itself, according to Bellarmine, to the attention of mankind.

With respect to the first of these, we have the unanimous concurrence of all and every enemy which has risen up to bark at, to bite, or devour us, that whatever be the faults of the episcopal communions, the Church, which is not papal, and is governed by bishops, is next in merit to their own

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peculiar communion, whatever it may be. We do not exult over the tragical end of our enemies, whether it be the fears of Cromwell, the remorse of Voltaire, the execution of puritanical regicides, or the guillotining of French infidels; because we believe that the judgments of God are generally reserved for the future world; and that the purposes of God with regard to the souls of men cannot be certainly discovered by the acts of his providence upon their bodies and estates.—Neither are we anxious to claim *temporal prosperity* as the last proof that the Episcopal Churches, which reject Popery, and uphold the doctrines of the Gospel, are true Churches. We believe that outward afflictions, accompanied with inward peace, are much more evidently the proofs of God's favour than pomp, and wealth, and honour. We remember the precept, that we should follow His steps who is the great Head of the Church; and who has left His people the command, that they should learn to suffer as well as to believe and obey. We pray that we may be prepared to drink that cup which a persecuting Church made our honoured forefathers to drink; and to be baptized with the baptisms of sorrow, and tears, and cruel sufferings, with which they were baptized. The collision is evidently hastening on, when Popery and infidelity, like death and Satan, shall once more emerge from the chaos of their traditions and superstitions, and ravage, with their united power, the paradise of that true Church, the spiritual Israel of God. In that hour of temptation let us pray that the Episcopal Churches may never eat of the forbidden fruit of tame compliance or servile fear. Let us pray to God that we may be like Christ in his hour of hunger and privation, when He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, away from the consolations of temporal prosperity. Let us resist the tempter by the word of God, and he will depart from the true Churches; and the angels shall come and minister to the successful conquerors of persecution and temptation.

I believe the time will again come when the Church, which thus deserves, will receive once more the homage of the people. Many scenes, and changes, and dangers, may be required to be passed through. Many will be the triumphs of its enemies; and fierce and numerous the contentions which will precede

its temporary depression and patient endurance; but as the people of God in ancient days welcomed the religion of truth which their fathers had despised, and wept with joy after their captivity to see the restoration of their former worship; so the day will come when, after more tyranny, and contest, and suffering, out of which it will emerge, purified and spiritual, the Church will break forth from the clouds of detraction; and beating back the darkness of superstition, and the threatening intolerance of its most ancient enemy, it shall triumph over the clamour, the hatred, and the insulting jealousies of its more modern foes. Peace and love shall be its portion. The affections of a religious people shall be devoted to their holiest institution. The legislature, then performing its duty most efficiently to the people, shall strenuously and jealously protect the Episcopal Church as the wisest teacher of truth, the best foundation of morality, and the brightest example (to all nations, Churches, and parties) of the union of spiritual authority, legal establishment, and unlimited toleration.

*There is, however, another mode* in which the duty of the magistrate, in matters of religion, is inculcated for the first time in the history of the world; the system which is adopted in the United States of America; that, namely, of unlimited toleration without any establishment. This system may be called the antipodes of Rome, which gives establishment without toleration. The legislature of America, in its capacity of supreme magistrate, makes no recognition of religion excepting that the law punishes blasphemy. There is no Established Church. No sanction is given to one faith more than another. The people are left to receive Christianity, or to reject it at their pleasure. No encouragement is given by the state to the building of churches or chapels. No means are used at the public charge to extend Christianity among the people in any form. The civil and criminal law is the only sanction on the part of the government to the encouragement of virtue or the prevention of crime. The effect of this plan of jurisprudence does not, in the opinion of many, recommend its establishment among other civilized nations. I have no wish to say any thing harsh or severe upon a people so nearly allied to ourselves as the Americans; but if the accounts of many travellers are to be credited, the ex-

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periment of thus ruling a people appears to have failed with respect to the religion, the best happiness, and the morality of the people. It has failed as to their religion. The inhabitants of the larger cities meet for worship and prayer; and much attention to religion prevails among them, especially in those parts of the country where Episcopal discipline preserves the benefits of a spiritual liturgy and a scriptural creed; but in the more retired districts, and in the back settlements, we are informed, that in consequence of no provision having been made for the extension of the Christian faith, the common people are churchless, sacramentless, Christless, ignorant; that where the necessity for religion is greatest, the demand for its blessings is least; that occasional excitement, under the name of *revivals*, supplies the place of more sober and regular worship; that millions of persons, hundreds of towns, and numerous extensive districts and provinces, are totally destitute of regular well-instructed teachers, who can keep up the knowledge and the influence of Christianity. The lands in the West are in the darkness of the shadow of death; and the effect, therefore, upon the happiness and morality of the people is seen by the institution of the savage law, which substitutes the caprice of the populace, when roused to sudden fury, for the grave tribunal of the lawful judge; and which so tolerates the burning brand of slavery, that whole congregations of professedly religious persons keep their slaves in common; and men who sign themselves Brethren in the Lord, encourage the hateful sin, and live in the constant, ceaseless misery of the fear of the rebellion, and revenge of their wretched victims. Religion ennobles a nation. The American has freedom, energy, and enterprise. The nation ought, by this time, to have had a character for that union of greatness, with excellence, which can only be produced by high moral principle, united with the mental superiority which proceeds from liberty and autonomous institutions. It has failed to attain this honourable distinction, because it has neglected religion while it has cultivated peace and freedom. It has mistaken the abuse for the use. Because the old governments of Europe, and the nation from whom they separated, joined intolerance and persecution with the endeavour to maintain truth, or what they believed to be truth; this government has proceeded to

the opposite extreme; and in its anxiety to avoid intolerance, has forgotten to give to the God of Heaven the honour of their national homage as a great and mighty people. The time must come when this mistake will be rectified, or the ruin which will follow the permission of slavery, the extension of the states, the clashing interests of the different provinces of the commonwealth, with the absence of any tie of religion to bind the people together; will unitedly operate to cause jealousies, and wars, and separation. The declarations of Scripture are as true as a law of nature. "Them that honour me," says the God of Revelation, "I will honour. They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The sentiment is as true of states and nations, as it is of apostate Churches, and sinful individuals<sup>9</sup>.

*There is yet another mode by which the magistrate might endeavour to establish the public morality, on the basis of religion, which has never yet, I believe, been tried by any legislature. It is to make the general sanctions of Christianity the basis of the laws, by declaring the Holy Scriptures to be part and parcel of the law of the land; and by promoting education on the principles of Scripture, without reference to the peculiar creeds of any Church or society of Christians. It is to provide the means of public worship for the people, according to that form or mode of prayer which they shall deem advisable; and so to divide the whole country into districts according to the population, that every person in the community shall be able to listen to the reading of Scripture, and join in the public worship. This mode of proceeding might be called the magisterial, legislative, or state religion. It could not be called the union of Church and State, though it might not improperly be denominated the union of religion and polity. The advantages of such a plan would be, that the mere act of reading the Scriptures and joining in the public prayers would prevent the jealousy of the smaller sects against the government and the Episcopal Church. Its disadvantages would be the expense; the uncertainty of opinions in religion, when the standards of truth were withdrawn from the view of the common people; its*

<sup>9</sup> See the various works which describe the Back Settlements of America, and especially Buckingham upon the Slave States.

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unscripturalness; and its discouragement of learning, knowledge, and religious enquiry, when the preaching and expounding of the Scriptures was withdrawn by the order of the state from its own mode of public instruction. But it is useless to discuss either its advantages or disadvantages. It is a mode of maintaining religion which we can never expect to see proposed, introduced, or adopted<sup>1</sup>; and we can only sum up the subject by concluding, that it is the duty of the state or magistrate to take care that the public morality be founded on the basis of religion, as that religion, is taught by the Episcopal Churches, and purified from unscriptural errors—to watch with unbending vigilance the influence of the clergy, and to tolerate to the utmost every opinion which is held conscientiously, without intruding upon the peace, order, and happiness of the nations he governs. These are the lessons which time and experience have taught to the Christian legislature of the greatest Christian nation. The influence of Britain extends over more than one-fifth of the human race. The prosperous plantation of the Episcopal Churches, the true Catholic Church, with the resolute determination that its clergy shall not rule; and that its people shall enjoy toleration, as well as be provided with the true faith and discipline of the ancient, Scriptural Catholic Church, has been, and is the secret of its strength, the proof of God's blessing, and the happiness of its people. We may add, it is the earnest of the extension of the Anglo-Saxon language, and of the best form of Christianity; till the object of the granting of revelation be accomplished, in the general improvement and happiness of mankind.

<sup>1</sup> Something similar to this plan was, however, proposed at the Reformation, when it was appointed that homilies be read by authority, and the public prayers be offered at certain

times, without enforcing the preaching or expounding of Scripture. This plan, however, recognized the Episcopal Church, and, in this respect, is not the same as that I have mentioned.

## BOOK II.

HISTORY OF THE CAUSES AND EXTENT OF PERSECUTION  
BY THE ROMAN CIVIL POWER, BEFORE AND AFTER THE  
ADOPTION OF CHRISTIANITY, AS THE RELIGION OF  
THE STATE.

### CHAPTER I.

*On the Persecutions by the Civil Power, before Constantine.*

WE are now to contemplate the fortunes of the Church of God in the modern wilderness, that we may derive from the survey some reflections which may be useful to its people in the present stage of their pilgrimage. BOOK II.  
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We begin our survey by calling to mind two expressions of the divine Founder of Christianity, which describe at once the result of all his Providence ; and the fate, also, which his followers were to anticipate ; and which the history before us records that they received. “ I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me ;” and, “ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” He has been lifted up upon the cross, and all men shall be drawn unto Him ; and the first writers upon the evidences of Christianity have justly been accustomed to rejoice in the early influence of his religion upon the first centuries in which it was preached to the world. We too have cause to believe, from the progress which Christianity, as the religion of the civilized man, is still perpetually making—that it shall certainly go on conquering and to conquer, till the family of the human race be restored to happiness, peace, and holiness. If we did not believe this truth, we should resign in despair all attempt to understand that mystery, which has permitted the origin and continuance of so much suffering. It is the custom with many to banish the Deity from the government of his own world, by imputing all events to sources which must unavoidably and necessarily have taken place, whether it pleased the providence of God John xii. 32.  
Matt. x. 16.

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so to order them or not. One value of revelation to the truly philosophical enquirer is derived from his observing the manner in which prophecy is the anticipation of history. The infidel sees the moral whirlwind and the storm—the falling of the thunderbolt upon the palaces of the proud, and the darting of the lightning upon the cottage of the poor. He marks the calm and serene which follow the shakings of the tempest; and he reasons, that there must be whirlwinds, and there must be tempests; and that during the whirlwind and the storm much injury must be done both to palaces and cottages; but fair and unclouded skies are to be expected when the tempests have ceased. With such profound inferences as these he rests contented, and calls his ignorance reasoning from second causes<sup>1</sup>.—The Christian has a more sure word of testimony. He holds in his hand the revelation which tells him before the omens of the whirlwind come, that the storm shall arise; and he knows where the bolt shall strike and the lightning shall destroy: and that the sky shall not be free from clouds and tempests till the arrows of God have struck down every enemy, whether in the palace or in the cottage. Then shall the calm follow. Then shall it be seen why the thunder roared and the lightning fell.—Ancient follies and modern infidelity—all crude fancies—all the absurd attempts to govern without religion—

<sup>1</sup> Though the success of the Gospel is generally attributed to these four causes—the apologies of the early Christians, the constancy of the martyrs, the pure morals, and the affectionate love of the primitive believers to each other, I cannot omit that cause which may, indeed, be said to be the foundation of the three last—the continuance of the miraculous powers, at least till the completion of the sacred volume, and till the establishment of certain churches by the termination of the lives of those persons who had received the same gifts, by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles. Whatever deductions impartial inquiry and the severest criticism may compel us to make from the more exaggerated accounts of some of the early writers, it is impossible to reject the conviction that the first converts were possessed of other than human powers,

to be enabled to lay the foundation of that fabric which was to be cemented by the blood of the martyrs. Preaching, suffering, charity, holiness, and miracles, were the foundations on which the Church was built.

See, on this subject, Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History; Gibbon, and the controversy arising from the celebrated work of Dr. Middleton on the miraculous powers. The opinion of Dr. Burton and Bishop Kaye is, that the miraculous powers ceased with the last Christian who received the imposition of the hands of the Apostles. See, also, Mosheim, de Rebus Gest. Christianor. ante Constant. Mag. p. 221. Waddington's History of the Church, p. 18, 19; and more particularly the recent Essay of Mr. Newman, prefixed to his translation of the Ecclesiastical History of Fleury, 8vo, Lond. 1843.

to educate without religion—to philosophise without religion, must have their day. Despotism, priestcraft, and atheism, must torment and perplex yet a little longer. The storm of evil, the whirlwind and tempest of agitation, and fear, and calamity, must still rage for a time: but the bolt shall strike them, and the lightning shall destroy them; and then shall the fair spring at length appear, when the prophecies of Christ have been all completed; and He who was lifted up shall have drawn all men unto Him.

“I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves,” was the next sentence by which our Lord described the destinies and characters of his disciples. Some of those who profess to be his followers have rather reversed than maintained this character, and have gone forth as wolves among sheep. In the beginning it was not so; and the question we have to consider is, first, the causes, and the extent, of the persecutions which were appointed by their Lord Himself to the first preachers of his Gospel, and their followers. They are three<sup>2</sup>—the popular hatred, the contempt of the philosophers, and the private motives of emperors changing the public law; or, in other words, wickedness of heart, pride of intellect, and worldly policy.

Before, however, we consider the detailed proofs, that these were the three principal sources of the persecutions of the first centuries, we must enquire into that one cause of persecution which was the foundation of them all—the attempt to reconcile evil with good, which called alike into active energy the populace, the philosopher, and the ruler.

All religion being derived from one revelation; and the object of that one revelation being to make man religious, and therefore spiritually and intellectually happy; man, since the commencement of revelation, in all ages and nations, under all forms of the corruption of truth, has never been able to eradicate from his mind, the knowledge and consciousness that he is not merely an earthly being; but that there is something beyond himself which he ought to propitiate and obey. Man, too, in addition to this, partly traditionary, and partly natural knowledge,

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Matt. x. 1

<sup>2</sup> Upon the causes which led to the persecutions of the early Christians by the heathen world, see Tillemont, Mem. ii. 167, and Mosheim, de Reb. Gestis Christ. p. 101.

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and conscience, finds also within himself that inferior and earthly bias, which induces him to prefer the present to the future, and to make a wrong choice of good. He possesses that inward direction of the will to the actions which render him miserable, and which are, therefore, forbidden, which theologians call Original Sin<sup>3</sup>, or the corruption of nature; which is not subject to the law of God. But man always seeks for happiness; and the whole human race, from the beginning of the world to the present day, seeks for that happiness in one of those three modes, which are severally pointed out to man,—by true religion; by corrupt religion; and by vain philosophy, or infidelity. One mode is to sacrifice evil to good; the second, to endeavour to reconcile the two; the third, to sacrifice good to evil. Religion, or the true secret of happiness, commands man to sacrifice the inward love of evil to the approbation and the fear of God. The corruption of religion says—Fear God; venerate an invisible power; keep up in the heart the recognition of the existence of something superior to man; but unite with that veneration of Deity, the indulgence of the desires which are inferior.—False philosophy, or infidelity, tells the human being to dismiss all his notions of Deity, as absurd and silly superstitions; to do as he pleases; and to act in all points, as his caprice, worldly interests, and the sanctions of society permit.—Few persons, in all ages, have been found to be among the first of these; few, until the last century, have been so silly and wicked as to be numbered among the last. The great majority of men in all ages, nations, and climates, have been among the second.—The attempt to reconcile evil with good continues to be, at this moment, the great source of that inward misery, which shrinks back from, and hates, and abhors, and would persecute, if possible, the preacher and reprover, who would convince man of his folly. This is the source of all that nominal Christianity—that union of inconsistent conduct with sacred principles—which blends together in one heart, light and darkness; God and Satan; sinning and repentance; death and life.—The preacher may discuss metaphysical, philosophical, historical, or any other kind of topic

<sup>3</sup> See the ninth Article of the Church of England, which expresses the Christian doctrine on this point, in the clearest and simplest manner.

he please, provided he is courteous and compromising on this one only subject, at which his unsparing and impetuous eloquence should be alone directed. I say alone directed; for every doctrine of truth is revealed to be made an additional motive to man to choose the good, and depart from the evil, that the happiness of the spirit may be secured. The attempt to reconcile good and evil within, is shown by more modes in the present day, than we can now stop to enumerate. In the days of the commencement of the preaching of Christianity, it was shown among the Jews by Pharisaism and Sadduceeism; and among the heathens by idolatry. Christianity was the unsparing, inveterate, uncompromising antagonist to both. Pharisaism endeavoured to reconcile truth and falsehood, by changing the spirituality of religion into observance of the ritual. This is the most common mode of compromise; and the Pharisees indulged the vices of the heart, while they professed with most zeal to serve God. Sadduceeism made the same profession; but speculated upon the improbability of the future accountableness of man. The Sadducees said, and they tried, perhaps, to persuade themselves, that there was no immortality. They cloaked their indulgence of evil under the mask of speculative enquiries, theological doubts, and an attractive scepticism<sup>4</sup>. The idolatry of Paganism was a bolder wickedness. It prescribed the mode in which every crime which could injure society—every vice which stained the heart—every thought that sullied the conscience, could be united with external homage to the Deity, with a magnificent ritual, and a constant worship of the Invisible. Every evil was sanctified by the example of a god. Every sin was an act of devotion. 'To steal was to be a votary to Mercury; to be degraded beyond the imagination and belief of Christian thought, was the sacred consecration of the soul to Venus. Superstition was the parent of immorality. Every abomination of the sensualities of the temples was a portion of the service to the immortal gods. The priests and the ministers of the very temples, while the garlands of flowers surrounded their heads, and the purple robes

<sup>4</sup> The tenets and practices of the Sadducees, as illustrated by Josephus, are collected and examined by Mosheim, de Reb. Gestis Christ. p. 48; Buddeus, Hist. Eccl. Vet. Test. ii. 1200, and in his Hist. Philosophiæ Hebræor. § 20.

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of their vocation adorned their dishonourable persons, sanctioned the deeds of impurity at the altars of the gods, amidst the ministrations of their infamous devotions, and the ascending of the burning incense of the prayers of their dark idolatries <sup>5</sup>.

All this pleased and gratified beyond description the corruption of the human heart. Their consciences were soothed by the adoration of the deified patrons of evil; their basenesses were gratified by the banishment of the idea that the moral depth of their defilement was offensive to the Deity, or injurious to their elevation as immortal spirits, in their future existence. Therefore it was, that *the popular odium was excited*, both among the Jews at first, and subsequently among the Romans, *by the aggressive nature of Christianity*. The Christian, who believed that the soul of man was capable of attaining, and was intended to attain, that highest degree of happiness which is called salvation, and which consists in present peace of mind, and present holiness of heart; and with increasing fitness for a future state, which shall be alike worthy of his own greatness as an immortal being, and worthy of the benevolence of the Deity, could not be content with earnestly praying and striving that he might himself become a partaker of that spiritual, intellectual, philosophical felicity before him. He ever deemed it to be a duty of benevolence, and a portion of his own happiness, to persuade others to believe in their immortality, and to welcome the revelation which discovers the secret of the true greatness of man. He regarded himself as failing in his duty to the God who imparted this great knowledge to himself, if he did not communicate it to his fellows, and endeavour to convince them that they were most miserable in their attempts to live as if money, ambition, honour, and

<sup>5</sup> See the Apology of Tertullian, chap. xv. p. 350, Chevallier's translation. The words of the original are—*Cetera lascivie ingenia, etiam voluptatibus vestris per decorum dedecus operantur*. "The same subject is eloquently treated by St. Cyprian, in his first Epistle (p. 2, edit. Bened.), who points out the depravity of manners prevalent among those who were accounted the most pious among the heathen. The reader

may consult with advantage, a Dissertation of Cornelius Adami, "*De malis Romanorum ante predicationem Evangelii moribus*," included in his *Exercitationes Exegeticae*, p. 501, edit. Gron., 1712, 4to. The fearful picture drawn by St. Paul, in the commencement of his Epistle to the Romans, will not be forgotten; to which may be added the testimony of a heathen writer, Seneca, *de Ira*, ii. 8.

worldly pleasures, were the objects to which an immortal being should limit his hopes and fears. He was most solicitous, being in earnest respecting his own highest good, to show to his fellow men ; that a man who has a voyage of six months to make, were he to lay in provision for one day only, would be an infinitely wiser person than the man who is to live for ever, and for ever, and for ever ; and who, after he has lived for many millions of centuries, being immortal, must still live for ever ; and who yet would make provision only for sixty or a hundred years.—A traveller who might be dying with thirst in the parched desert, who cannot live one moment unless he obtain a drop of water to preserve life, would be only mocked and insulted if a fellow-traveller, clothed in purple and splendour, were to approach him with reverence, and place before him heaps of pearls, and large ingots of gold, and tell him that he had vast estates in Europe, and wealth and possessions in abundance granted to him for his merits and virtues, while the poor man is dying for the water which alone can save him ;—so it is, that he who is conscious of his immortality, and dying with thirst for the waters of eternal life, in the parched desert of the world ; and who sees that he cannot live to God and to his higher good, unless that water of life be granted to him ; is only mocked and insulted when his fellow men, clothed in the robes of rank, or wealth, or philosophy, gather around him, and place before him the gems and honours of the world ; and assure him that his worldly hopes will be successful, and that he shall receive all that ambition can desire, or avarice can covet. He who is convinced of the value of the soul, and of the happiness which revelation has developed to be its destiny, must endeavour to persuade his brethren of mankind to secure their best happiness, or he will believe that he has failed in his duty : and this, this was the spirit of the first preachers of Christianity. The religion of Christ is essentially an aggressive religion. The Christian is the assailant of idolatry, superstition, and evil. It is true liberality that he should be so. The activity of proselytism elicits more truth, provided it appeal to argument only ; than the dead torpor of that insult to reason, indifference to supposed error, which is so pleasing to the indolent, the superficial, or the fastidious ; and which is so

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common in the present day, when the slightest allusion to religion is regarded too often as a breach of courtesy, or an offence against that conventional uniformity which is termed *good society*. The early Christians were imbued with another spirit. They not only believed that Christianity was intended to be the leaven which was to leaven the whole mass of the corruption of mankind; but they esteemed it to be their duty to convince the worshipper of the evil of the heart, (for idolatry, as I shall show, was but another name for philosophical and profligate evil,) that he was following a delusion, and choosing real misery. They believed that Christ did not design his religion to be tolerated, but to triumph. The mandate under which they went forth was this, "Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of every human being." This was the mandate; and the Apostles obeyed their master. "Woe is me," said the most laborious of the number of the first converts, "if I preach not the gospel;" and the same spirit animated the others also; and Christianity was proposed to the world, not as a speculative notion, or as a philosophical opinion, or as a theory which might be rejected at pleasure: but it was proposed, and urged, and insisted upon, as a religion of divine origin—of undoubted truth—of exclusive demands upon the attention—of unsparing condemnation of all the popular idolatry, and every favourite vice which could please the corrupt heart, and gratify the desire of the indulgence of every evil. For such a religion, and for such teachers, there could be no toleration<sup>6</sup>. Malice and prejudice, surprise and contempt, hatred and persecution, must be the penalty for the supposed presumption of the despised strangers who thus arrayed themselves against the wickedness of a world<sup>7</sup>. They had gone forth, as their divine Master had described them, "as sheep amidst wolves;" and though from the day of Pentecost to the edict of Milan (A.D. 311), there were some intervals during which the rage of the populace was wearied, or the execution of the odious Neronianism of the persecuting decrees of the emperors was suspended, yet the

Mark xvi.  
15.

1 Cor. ix. 16.

<sup>6</sup> See Mosheim, de Reb. Gestis Christ. ante Const. Mag. p. 102, where the passages from Tacitus and Suetonius, upon which the statement of the text is founded, are examined, but more

especially Kortholt, cap. i. "De persecutione prima, sub Nerone."

<sup>7</sup> Burton's History of the Church, chap. iv. pp. 84. 107.

Christian Churches may be said, through the whole of this period, to be in a state of unrelenting, though sometimes of less active persecution<sup>8</sup>.

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As the extent of the severity of the early persecutions has been called in question of late years, and as there seems to be a disposition with Gibbon to represent the primitive Christians as weak men; the religion they opposed as an "elegant mythology;" and the statements of the first writers as exaggerations; it may be well to refer to some of the principal authorities on this point—the universality of the popular hatred against the original teachers of Christianity.

It is not unusual in this inquiry, altogether to omit the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles, because it relates to that period only when the Jews were still a political power<sup>9</sup>. This, however, is a very partial view of the case. That book gives a true and accurate picture of the manners of the whole generation in the Roman empire; not in Jerusalem and Judea only, but through many of its principal cities: and we find that the Christians were persecuted in almost every instance, either by the masses of the population, or at their instigation. We do not, I think, wrongly conclude, therefore, that the persecutions of the following generations principally arose from the very same cause: and that those reasoners take an unfair and narrow view of the matter, who would limit the number of martyrs to those whose names are mentioned in public documents; or, who merely fell victims to the decisions of the legal tribunals. We must remember that Christianity began to be preached when the power of the people was at its height—when no philosopher was regarded who did not flatter them; and no ruler was tolerated who did not please them. The third Cæsar only governed the empire. The authority of the Cæsars was founded on the ascendancy which that imperious family had acquired, by placing themselves at the head of the popular, or plebeian, party of Rome; by depressing and weakening the aristocracy, by complying with all the demands of the masses, provided they were clamorous and persevering; and by ruling in the

<sup>8</sup> This was the conclusion of Lardner. I shall briefly consider immediately the controversy between Dodwell and Ruinart.

<sup>9</sup> See Kortholt's preliminary dissertation, "*De persecutionibus ecclesiæ Apostolicæ.*"

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despotic and cruel manner which is recorded in history, according to the forms of freedom, and by submission to the will of the populace. Tiberius was the jealous emperor of the hour; and the inflexible tyrant would have spared no subordinate ruler who might have been accused by the people, as indifferent to the expression of their caprice. Under this influence, Christ Himself was crucified. The populace of Jerusalem, instigated by their rulers, demanded his death. When Pilate hesitated to condemn our Lord, and repeatedly endeavoured to save Him, because "he found no fault in him at all," he did not dare to resist the popular clamour, which threatened to accuse him to Tiberius. The first persecution which overwhelmed the infant Church after the Ascension, did not precede, but follow, the violence of the popular tumult in which St. Stephen was put to death. The second persecution under Herod Agrippa, in which James, the brother of John<sup>10</sup>, was put to death, was

Luke xxiii.  
4. 14.

Acts viii. 1;  
xii. 1.

<sup>10</sup> ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας, is the original. It came to pass on that very day, that is, immediately that the popular tumult appeared to justify the magistrates, they began to persecute the Christians, instead of punishing their murderers.

James, the brother of John, was killed at Jerusalem in the year 44, (according to Bishop Pearson, in his *Annales Paulini*, p. 5,) at which time the Apostles had not left Jerusalem; and we are told by St. Luke, the author of the Book of the Acts, that on the persecution, after the death of Stephen, though all the Church were scattered, the Apostles remained. (Acts viii. 1.) We are assured, also, that none of the Apostles preached to the Gentiles till after the conversion of St. Paul, in the year 45. (Acts xiii. 2.) Cornelius had been a proselyte of the gate. We read, also, that St. Paul (Rom. xv. 19) was anxious to preach the Gospel only in those countries where it had not been preached before, lest he should appear to build upon another man's foundation. We read, too, that he was about to take a journey into Spain (Acts xv. 24), no doubt for the purpose of preaching the Gospel in that country. Under these circumstances, though St. James, who was now killed by Herod Agrippa, is the same as St. James of Compostella, the

patron saint of Spain, we may, I think, justly doubt whether those traditions are true which are so generally believed in that country. We are informed, that this Apostle, soon after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, was commanded by Christ to go and preach in Spain. He hesitated to obey, until the Virgin Mary had blessed him and sanctioned the embassy. The Virgin accordingly commissioned him to go to Spain, and to build the first church there to her honour. He obeyed, and taking twelve apostles with him, sailed round Spain, landed in Galicia, and among other miracles raised to life an old prophet who had been dead six hundred years; and having baptized him, gave him the name of Peter, and made him Archbishop of Braga. From Braga he went to Saragossa, where he saw the Virgin Mary coming down from heaven on a pillar of jasper (whence she is called our Lady of the Pillar). The Virgin commanded him to build a church, which is the first church ever dedicated to her. Being dissatisfied with the small number of his proselytes, however, he returned to Jerusalem with his twelve apostles, taking France and Britain in his way. He was beheaded there, and his disciples took his body to Joppa, whence it was taken to Compostella, then a thick wood, where it was discovered

increased in severity, because the king saw that his severity pleased the Jews. The Gospel now began to be preached out of the precincts of Judea to the Gentiles. At Antioch in Pisidia, in the year 45, the Apostles were compelled to flee from the city, because the people were excited against them. The same proceedings took place at Iconium. The Apostle, in all these instances, was assaulted; threatened with stoning in one place; and actually stoned and left for dead, in another, solely by the people, without any interference on the part of the magistrates. At Thyatira, when the multitude rose up against them, in consequence of an act of revenge on the part of certain citizens, the magistrates beat them, and cast the Apostles, instead of their assailants, into prison. The mere rabble at Thessalonica endangered them, without reproof. At Athens, St. Paul was not persecuted; he was only mocked and derided. In Corinth, after he had been permitted to remain there undisturbed eighteen months, the magistrate refused to take any cognizance of the insurrection excited by the Jews; and deemed it beneath his notice to interfere in what he regarded as the squabbles of contending Jews. His refusal to protect the Apostles encouraged the people to commit some violence, though none of the friends of the Apostles were put to death. At Ephesus a great tumult was made; but was repressed by the moderation of the magistrates. At Jerusalem, the life of St Paul was saved by the interference only of the soldiers. He was tried at the public tribunal, and acquitted; but was left in prison by the magistrate, to please the Jews. In all these instances, we are presented only with the picture of the incessant tumults which must have occurred in the principal cities of the empire, upon the preaching of Christianity at the beginning. There was one incessant persecution. The account which St. Paul gives, appears to describe best the general contempt in which the Christians were held. They were as those reserved to be

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Acts xii. 3.

Acts xiii. 45  
—50.  
Acts xiv. 2.  
5. 19.

Acts xvi. 22.

Acts xvii. 5.

Acts xvii.  
32.

Acts xviii.  
11, et seq.

Acts xix. 29.

Acts xxi. 27.

Acts xxiv.  
27.

1 Cor. iv. 9.

about the year 830, by miracle, and a church was built over it, and endowed with many privileges. All this, though it has been firmly believed, with many other circumstances respecting his head being given by the king's daughter to Don Diego de Gilmorez, and respecting his appearance, armed cap-a-pie, to fight against the Moors, as a reward

to the Spaniards for their veneration of his memory, is, I repeat, more than doubtful. Concerning these legends, consult J. A. Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc. N. T.* i. 351; iii. 725; and his *Lux Salut. Evang.* p. 375. When will the Church, which sanctions such legends, awake from the sleep of ages, and purify itself before the world?

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a spectacle in some great theatre, in which the whole creation —angels and men—are the spectators, to exhibit before them an endless variety of suffering<sup>1</sup>. The description which is given us of similar scenes to these, by the early apologists and authors who have related the history of the primitive Church, renders the so much agitated questions, both as to the number of persecutions and the amount of victims, a matter of little importance. The argument in favour of the truth of Christianity, derived from the persecutions of the early Christians, is much more powerful when it is taken from their daily exposure to death and suffering from popular indignation and hatred; than from the greater or less number of victims at any given period; or from the precise quantity of edicts which were issued by a weak, a wicked, or a populace-courting emperor. We shall find that nearly all the heathen persecutions either originated in, or were supported by, the indignation, or hatred, or contempt, of the mass of the people.

Proofs of the popular indignation against the Christians are found in each of the reigns of the ten emperors who are reputed to have been, to a greater or less extent, the persecutors of the Church. Tacitus describes the Christians who perished in the cruelty of Nero, as being held in abhorrence for their crimes; and as being the common hatred of the human race<sup>2</sup>. Suetonius speaks of the Christians as guilty of some new and horrible superstition<sup>3</sup>.

Domitian is ranked among the persecutors, in consequence of his condemning some of his own family to death as Christians. Their supposed crime is mentioned by the historian with the utmost contempt, as that of impiety, or atheism, and attachment to Jewish ceremonies<sup>4</sup>. The Epistle of Pliny to Trajan, the next of the supposed persecutors, fully proves the truth of the remark of Eusebius, that the persecution in

<sup>1</sup> See Shuttleworth's Paraphrase of the passage.

<sup>2</sup> Exitialis superstitio rursus erumpbat, non modo per Judæam originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocitas aut pudenda confluent, celebranturque. Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde in crimine incendiis, quam odio humani generis convicti sunt.—Tacit.

Annales, xv. 44. Opp. i. 1067, edit. Gronov. Amst. 1685.

<sup>3</sup> Afflicti supplicis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ.—Sueton. Vit. Neronis, cap. 16.

<sup>4</sup> ἐπινηχθῆ καὶ ἀμφοῖν ἐγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὃς ἦς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἡθῆ ἐξεκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν.—Dio Cass. lib. lxxvii. p. 766, edit. fol. Hanov. 1606.

his reign was excited by popular tumults<sup>5</sup>. That letter was occasioned by the angry outbreakings of the populace, in Bithynia; and, as Eusebius declares, not only in that but in many cities.

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Hadrian endeavoured to stop the common compliance of the magistrates with the hatred of the people, by writing to Minucius Fundanus, that the Christians should not be put to death because of the popular clamour. Eusebius gives us the letter, which was a reply to one of Serenius Granianus, the Proconsul of Asia<sup>6</sup>. It fully proves the dislike of the provincials to the Christians. Tertullian<sup>7</sup> and Arnobius<sup>8</sup> are no less explicit concerning the hatred of the people towards the Christians at this period, and in the time when they lived.

Antoninus Pius reigned from the year 138 to 161, and published no edicts against the Christians. If, however, we may believe that an edict mentioned by Eusebius is genuine, the hatred of the people continued; and the emperor endeavoured to restrain it from breaking out into open excess. Another edict, to the same effect, is mentioned by Justin Martyr, at the end of the first Apology<sup>9</sup>.

Marcus Antoninus was one of the most severe and unsparing of the persecutors of the Church. He seems to have attained to the highest rank among those who were eminent for worldly prudence, talent, and wisdom; and he employed all to oppress, or rather to extirpate, Christianity. The hatred of the people to the Christians was displayed in his reign, by their continued accusations, and by the grossest insults. They carried about a figure painted—with ass's ears; with a book in its hand; and wearing a robe. They called it Onokoitis, and the God of the Christians<sup>1</sup>. They insulted, also, the dead

<sup>5</sup> μερικῶς καὶ κατὰ πόλεις ἐξ ἐπ-  
αναστάσεως δῆμων.—Eusebius, Hist.  
Eccl. lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 126, edit.  
Reading, fol. Cantab. 1720.

<sup>6</sup> εἰ οὖν σαφὲς εἰς ταύτην τὴν  
ἀξίωσιν οἱ ἐπαρχῶται δύνανται, δις-  
χυρίζεσθαι κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ὡς  
καὶ πρὸ βήματος ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἐπὶ  
τοῦτο μόνον τραπῶσιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀξιό-  
σεσιν, οὐδὲ μόναις βοαίς.—Euseb. Hist.  
Eccl. lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Adversum sanguinem innocentium  
conclamant, prætexentes sane ad odii  
defensionem illam quoque vanitatem  
quod existiment omnis publicæ cladis,

omnis popularis incommodi Christianos  
esse causam.—Tertul. Apol. cap. xl.

<sup>8</sup> Comperi, nonnullos, qui se pluri-  
mum sapere suis persuasionibus cre-  
dunt, insanire, bacchari, et velut quid-  
dam promptum ex oraculo dicere,  
postquam esse in mundo Christiana  
gens cœpit, terrarum orbem perisse,  
etc.—Arnob. adv. Gentes, ap. Korthol.  
p. 127.

<sup>9</sup> Both edicts are given at the end  
of Mr. Chevallier's Translation of the  
Apology of Justin Martyr.

<sup>1</sup> Nova jam Dei nostri in ista  
proxime civitate editio publicata est;

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bodies of the martyrs; and are recorded to have been most anxious to display, on all occasions, their contempt and hatred<sup>2</sup>.

Severus, in the commencement of his reign, refused to sanction the popular prejudices against the Christians. On returning, however, from an expedition to the East, he forbade the propagation of the Gospel in his dominions. The Christians refused obedience. The emperor persisted. He encouraged the populace in their resentment, and executed his intolerant edicts with the utmost rigour and severity. The hatred of the people was especially displayed, during this persecution, in the city of Alexandria. They were enraged at the firmness of the martyrs in the amphitheatre, and exulted at seeing them perish by the wild beasts, the gladiators, or the executioners<sup>3</sup>.

The earthquakes in the reign of Maximin were imputed by the people to the Christians, who oppressed the heads of the Church more than the humbler members. Immediately prior to the reign of Decius, the rabble at Alexandria rose up and murdered many of the Christians without provocation. The emperor soon after commenced one of the most violent of all the persecutions. Valerian was the murderer of Cyprian, who escaped the usual sorrow of being put to death with contumely and insult; for the very opponents of Christianity respected his patience, piety, and virtues<sup>4</sup>. Fifty years of comparative tranquillity elapsed till Diocletian revived the laws of blood in all their horrors, applauded by the philosophers, and cheered by the populace; and there can be no

ex quo quidam frustrandis bestiis mercenarius noxius picturam proposuit cum ejusmodi inscriptione:—"Deus Christianorum Onochæotes." Is erat auribus asininis, altero pede unguatus, librum gestans, et togatus.—Tertul. Apol. cap. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> See Kortholt, de Persecutione sub M. Antonino. This book is too little known. It is one of the most useful compilations on the subject of the persecutions before Constantine. Its title is, "Christiani Kortholti, S. Theo. D. Prof. Primar. et Procancellarii Acad. Kilon., De Persecutionibus Ecclesie Primæviæ, sub Imperatoribus Ethnicis Liber." 4to, Kiloni, 1633.

<sup>3</sup> The feeling of Severus towards Christianity may be gathered from Tertullian, ad Scap. cap. iv.; along with which, Dodwell's Eleventh Dissertation to St. Cyprian, § 44, should be consulted.

<sup>4</sup> The greatest pause in the popular hatred of the people against the Christians was between the times of Valerian and Diocletian.—Nec populorum in theatris adversus Christianos clamantium, nec præfectorum in eosdem decernentium ulla habemus in bonæ fidei monumentis vel minima vestigia.—Dodwell, de paucitate martyrum, § lxy.

doubt that more Christians perished from this cause than from the severest edicts of the most intolerant of the imperial persecutors. The great triumph of Christianity appears to me to be its conquest over the cruel mockings, the ceaseless hatred, the bitter scorn, the insecurity of life, liberty, person, and property, the helplessness and the blamelessness of the Christian Church through so many years; much more than the endurance of the bodily suffering of a threatened, open, cruel death. The spirit of a man will bear the presence of the instrument of torture and the countenance of the torturer. The patience and the heroic fortitude bearing up the soul in humility; and the faith and hope, amidst the daily threatening and the hourly expectation of death in agony, are the most solid proofs of the truth and reality of religion. Paganism had no martyrs. Christianity never demanded them. Philosophy has no martyrs. It consists of well reasoned doubts, and it affords no truths which could support the spirit in the prospect of suffering and death. Patriotism has produced its victims; but they were cheered with popular applause, and the conviction of earthly glory; and patriotism is the next virtue to religion. Faith in Christ alone could effect the moral miracle which characterizes the Christian martyr. The conviction of the approbation of God alone can enable the believer to undergo the sorrow and the pain, the torments of body, and the depression of soul, which are embittered by the almost universal contempt and scorn of the society and people among whom we live. The hatred of the mass against Christianity nerved the arm of the persecuting magistrate, and constituted by its continuance and cruelty the heaviest trial of the patient and suffering believer.

The next causes of persecution were the jealousy of the philosophers, the opposition of the priesthood, and the corruption of the local magistracy. These, however, were but the reflection of the hatred of the people. I pass them by to consider the third cause—the state of the public law, and the private motives of the emperors. These have not been sufficiently taken into account. They may justly be classed among the principal causes of the calamities of the early believers.

Whatever may have been the influence of the popular

decision on the mind of the imperial rulers, it must be considered probable that the government, which had usurped the legal power of the people, and was unchecked by the remaining authority of the senate, would not be always controlled by the popular caprice. The emperors were so powerful, that they could have sometimes ventured, with impunity, to check the popular violence, and to change the public law. This, till the time of Constantine, with the exception of one or two disregarded edicts, they did not attempt to do. We may justly believe, that the omission may have proceeded from that adherence to the public law which will always be a prevailing motive to a ruler, especially if it be enthusiastically supported by the people, as in the conflict of Christianity with its opponents.

The principle upon which the laws of Paganism, which persecuted Christianity, were founded, was briefly this—that the manner in which the Deity was to be worshipped depended upon the will of the magistrate, and not upon the free choice, or deliberately formed opinion of the worshipper. This principle was embodied in various laws, mentioned by Livy and by Cicero, by Valerius Maximus and by Dio Cassius, by Julius Paulus and others<sup>5</sup>; and it was in consequence of these laws that the common reproach of the vulgar, in justification of the hatred of the Christians, was so often urged—the law does not permit your religion; the law does not sanction your meetings<sup>6</sup>.

Orders, says Livy<sup>7</sup>, were given to the ædiles to take care that none except the ancient gods of Rome were worshipped, nor in any other than the established forms. This was done 430 years before Christ. Two hundred years after this it was decreed, that none should retain possession of any books, prayers, oracles, or any written acts of sacrifice, but deliver them up within a certain time to the prætor of the city; and that none were to sacrifice to the gods, on public or private

<sup>5</sup> Two of our latest writers have referred to them in their *Histories of the Church*: Neander, translated by Rose, i. 82, &c., and Waddington's *Hist. of the Church*, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> "Non licet esse vos," was the term mentioned by Tertullian as in most frequent use among the populace.

Celsus accused the Christians of holding secret meetings, by which they contravened the prevailing laws with regard to religion.—See Neander, *ut supra*.

<sup>7</sup> Livy, book iv. c. xxx. opp. i. 378, edit. 1679.

grounds, after new or foreign rites<sup>8</sup>. The same writers assure us, also, that it had been customary in all ages of the republic to empower the magistrates to prevent all foreign worship; to expel its ministers from the forum, the circus, and the city; to search for and to burn the religious books; and to abolish every form of sacrifice but that which was national and established. The testimony of Cicero<sup>9</sup> is express to the same effect—no man shall have separate gods for himself, and no man shall worship new or foreign gods, unless they shall have been publicly acknowledged by the laws of the state. He gives the law as an extract from, or rather as an abstract of, one of the most ancient laws of Rome. Valerius Maximus, who lived in the reign of Tiberius, confirms the accounts of the jealousy with which all foreign religions were prohibited by the Roman republic<sup>1</sup>. That the custom of the republic was continued by the emperors is affirmed by Dio Cassius, who represents Mæcenas as exhorting Augustus to hate and punish all foreign religions, and to compel all men to conform to the national worship<sup>2</sup>. These accounts of the ancient and unwavering fidelity of Pagan Rome, are confirmed by the Roman civilian, Julius Paulus<sup>3</sup>, who declares that one of the leading principles of Roman law was, that those who introduced new religions, or such by which the minds of men might be agitated<sup>4</sup>; were either to be degraded or slain, according to their rank in society. Other passages might be adduced, but these are

<sup>8</sup> Livy, book xxxix. c. xvi. opp. iii. 578. Waddington, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero, de Legibus, lib. ii. c. 8. In his first book, cap. 6, he defines law—Lex est ratio summa, insita in naturâ, quæ jubet ea, quæ faciendâ sunt, prohibetque contraria. Eadem ratio, cum est in hominis mente, confirmata et confecta, lex est. He then goes on to speculate on his own definition and the definition current among the Greeks; and so it has ever been, that the greatest absurdities are often defended by the most pompous generalities. Cicero makes antiquity one part of his ratio summa, insita in naturâ, just as some customs, which may well be discontinued, are even still justified by their ancient ecclesiastical origin. Separatim, he says, quoting, but at the same time approv-

ing the old law, nemo habeset deos; neve novos, sed ne advenas nisi publice adscitos, privatim colunto. So all legislators have in former times decreed, and if the human mind had not, in the course of its continued intellectual progress, always broken such fetters, the human race would have been as much enslaved by Paganism, as it is still, in some places, by decrees, decisions, and enactments, which must and shall be rescinded.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i. c. iii. The title of the chapter is, "De peregrina religione rejecta." Opp. p. 39, edit. 1670.

<sup>2</sup> Neander doubts the genuineness of this speech.—History of the Church, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Book v. tit. xxi. of Neander.

<sup>4</sup> De quibus animi hominum moverentur.

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sufficient to prove that Paganism was intolerant of any creed, worship, or opinion, but that which the civil magistrate and the public law approved, sanctioned, and established; and that as Christianity was not a *religio licita*<sup>5</sup>—a religion protected by law—the upholders, votaries, and teachers of the new faith went forth among the people conscious of their danger, and willing to undergo the penalty which the populace demanded, and which the state was ready to inflict.

The state of the public law then may be said to have been the next source of persecution. In despotic governments, however, though the public clamour and the public law, when they are both united in one object, may seem to be, in all cases, a sufficient reason for any conduct on the part of a ruler; there is yet room for those private motives to operate which are much more influential than such as may be publicly alleged. I cannot but think that some more especial cause than either the hatred of the people, or the written laws of Rome, induced many of the Roman persecutors to inflict these severities upon their people. It was necessary to the strength and increase of the Church that it should pass through this fire of persecution at the commencement of its progress<sup>6</sup>. In discovering the private motives of the hostility which it encountered, we shall find that it endured every effort for its destruction, which could be suggested by every possible motive that an evil heart could devise, or malicious ingenuity put in operation. It was to endure every trial, and conquer. Its failures, as the course of our story will prove, proceeded from the smiles of prosperity; and not from the frowns of adversity, nor the efforts of its enemies.

The first heathen persecution of the Christians was by Nero. We learn from the Epistle to the Romans, which had been written some years before the burning of the city by Nero, that the faith of the Roman converts was spoken of throughout the whole world<sup>7</sup>. Persons to whom the Apostle, and Tertius, his amanuensis, sent their salutations, appear to

Rom. xi. 8.

<sup>5</sup> See Taylor's Civil Law on the Senatus Consultum Marchianum, p. 368, &c.

<sup>6</sup> An Academic Dissertation, by J. D. Baier, (4to, Altorf. 1730.) "De Ecclesie pressus felicitate," places this comfortable truth in a clear and satis-

factory light, and contains many valuable observations.

<sup>7</sup> A fund of very valuable information respecting the early preaching of the Gospel at Rome may be seen in Ant. de Dominis de Republ. Eccl. iv. 1, fol. Lond. 1617.

have been of some rank in the city. Erastus, chamberlain of the city of Corinth, desired his salutations. Narcissus and Aristobulus were persons of authority and eminence in Rome. Their friends, and the members of their household, whom St. Paul greets, were probably not of inferior estimation. In the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul sends messages from some of the saints which were of Cæsar's household. That epistle was written from Rome some years after that which he sent to the Romans; but it cannot be said to be improbable that some converts were at this time in the family of Nero himself. The other converts also, who are named in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, being mentioned for their hospitality, benevolence, usefulness, or labours, which labours being in the service of the Church, leisure from other pursuits is implied; and that they were probably persons in the better rank of life; and not of the very poor and despised class, which the first followers of Christianity were generally supposed to have been. To such persons the favour of the sovereign is generally desirable, as the approbation of the loyalty which is so frequently the result of religious principle, and the desire to live peacefully in all godliness and honesty. The love of friends, of home and its enjoyments, peace of mind, the blessing of God upon their efforts to extend truth, all appear to have been their portion in consequence of the repose of the edicts of the public law, which forbade them to profess Christianity; when twelve of the fourteen regions, or quarters of the city, are suddenly burnt to the ground; and they—the quiet, the peaceful, the respected, the beloved—are as suddenly dragged from their homes, blackened with calumny, accused of the destruction of Rome, execrated as the hatred of mankind, and consigned to the most degrading and insulting tortures, before they were put to a lingering and miserable death. How must their sufferings have been aggravated by the contrast of their former condition, when they were covered with the skins of beasts, and hunted with dogs—when they were clothed with garments covered with combustible materials, to be slowly burnt to death in the gardens of the emperor, at once the pity and the amusement of the populace and the court<sup>8</sup>! All this was done to direct the hatred of the people

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Rom. xvi.  
22.  
Rom. xvi.  
23.

<sup>8</sup> The persecution by Nero happened A. D. 64. Concerning it, see Tillemont,

to another object, than the real author of the desolation of Rome. All was done from cruelty, falsehood, and fear. Whatever evil passion governed the heart of the persecutor, the barbarous execution of Christians satisfied the indignation of the people against the author of the crime, and permitted the great criminal to escape by inflicting the punishment of guilt upon the unprotected and the innocent.

Domitian<sup>9</sup> persecuted the Christians because his kindred, Acilius Glabrio and others, adopted the new religion. Trajan, because the people of Antioch were in a state of excitement against Christianity; and Ignatius must be given to the wild beasts<sup>1</sup>. Too indolent or too careless to enquire whether the Christians were right or wrong, in the faith they professed to hold and teach, they were not to be put to death unless they refused to worship the idols of paganism. Gentle and amiable as the world esteemed them to be, Pliny and Trajan were as ignorant of truth, and as injurious to its cause, as the more severe and hostile of their partners in the war against Christianity; for the answer of Trajan, which sanctioned the execution of the Christians who were commanded, but refused to burn incense, formed a precedent, which was acted upon by their successors with much and cruel severity.

Hadrian persecuted the Christians because, though he directed Minucius Fundanus to punish none but those who had positively violated the laws, he would not restrain the governors of the provinces, who insured the attachment of the priests, and the applause of the multitude, by unjustly condemning the Christians to the lions; in the deficiency of more guilty criminals, or in the absence of the well trained gladiator. His addiction to the Eleusinian mysteries, magic, judicial astrology, and other similar superstitions, gave the priests of the heathen much influence over him; and this influence they employed in the persecution of the Christians<sup>2</sup>. "He who allows oppression shares the crime."

Antoninus Pius, as well as Hadrian, is not considered as a persecutor. He must, however, for the same reason that we condemn the latter, be so denominated, because he would

Mem. ii. 71; Mosheim, Hist. Christ. ante Const. Mag. p. 107; and Kortholt, cap. i.

<sup>9</sup> A. D. 95. Tillmont, ii. 117; Kor-

tholt, cap. ii.

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 107. Tillem, ii. 169; Kortholt, cap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Tillem. ii. 224.

not interpose to take care that his own edicts, his special edicts in favour of the Christians, were executed by the provincial magistrates in Asia and Greece. He commanded the men in office to abstain from molesting the Christians, and then permitted them to molest them at their pleasure. It was all one to the victims, whether their sufferings proceeded from hypocrisy, indolence, or selfishness<sup>3</sup>.

Humanity and justice, wisdom and excellence, in every department of his high office, are said to have characterized the reign of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus<sup>4</sup>, excepting that of justice to the Christians. His love of mercy would not prevent the martyrdom of Polycarp; nor his knowledge and love of literature the sacrifice of the eloquent Justin Martyr. He had neither the firmness nor the wisdom to check the superstition which ascribed every evil that befel the empire—whether famine, or earthquake, or pestilence—to the indignation of the gods against the Christians: and the rabble of Rome, or Alexandria, were amused with the exhibition of Christians and wild beasts in the amphitheatre, whenever a river overflowed its banks; or the Nile did not rise to its expected height. “Whatever,” says the inspired page, “is not of faith, is sin;” and the virtues themselves of the natural man are very often as much opposed to spiritual religion and the influence of its followers; as the vices they unite to condemn.

The blood of the Christians was shed still more unsparingly in the reign of Septimus Severus<sup>5</sup>, because, though nine years elapsed before there was any more avowed persecution, so terrible was the cruelty at length exercised on the Christians, on account of the refusal of many of their number to enrol themselves in the army, that the writers among the Christians began to predict the end of the world, under the conviction that a persecution so cruel and severe must be the work of the anti-christ which should precede that eventful period. It was not for them, as it was neither for their predecessors, the Apostles, nor for us, their followers, to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has set in his own power only; but that

<sup>3</sup> Tillem. ii. 307.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 161. Tillem. ii. 307; Kortholt, cap. v.

<sup>5</sup> A. D. 203. Euseb. H. E. vi. 1. 7; Tertullian, Apolog. cap. xii. p. 125, edit. Havercamp; Kortholt, cap. vi.

day must, indeed, have been a day of gloom and sorrow, which could anticipate the destruction of the world before the object of its creation, in the restoration of man to God, is evidently and fully completed.

Maximin<sup>6</sup> was a persecutor, because his predecessor had been merciful to the Christians. Decius<sup>7</sup> persecuted from a determined resolution to extirpate Christianity, and restore the old religion. Pagan pride and heathen virtue—the destroyers of amiableness, and hardeners of the heart—appear to have been the only assignable motives for his inflexible and unsparing cruelty. Valerian was a persecutor from superstition. He permitted himself to be persuaded by Macrianus, and his companions, the astrologers, that an edict should be issued to compel the subjects of the emperor to adopt the ancient religious ceremonies of Rome. The consequences were written in the blood of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons<sup>8</sup>; of Xystus, the fifth Bishop of Rome, who, in succession, had suffered martyrdom in the space of eight years; and in that of Cyprian, the ornament of the Church; the gentle, the good, and the meek; who prayed, and longed for, and wrote for the peace of Jerusalem; and prospered in holy influence till he was rewarded with the crown of the martyr<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> This persecution broke out in A. D. 235 or 237, and raged during three years. See Euseb. H. E. vi. 28; Kortholt, cap. vii.

<sup>7</sup> A. D. 249. The writings of the fathers contain many references to the intense severity of this persecution. See them collected by Walsh, Hist. Eccl. N. T., p. 1251. See also Kortholt, cap. viii.

<sup>8</sup> A. D. 258. See Dionysius of Alexandria, quoted by Euseb. H. E. vii. 10; Kortholt, cap. ix.

<sup>9</sup> Gallienus, A. D. 259, (see Euseb. H. E. vii. 13,) granted to the Christians, by public edict, the free exercise of their religion, and commanded that all the burial-grounds belonging to their churches, and other houses and grounds which had been confiscated under the foregoing government, should be restored to them. He thus recognised the Christian Church, says Neander, as a legally existing corporate body; for none but such, according to the Roman constitution, could possess a common property. Neander supposes,

also, that this edict of Gallienus made Christianity a *religio licita*; but it may be questioned whether Neander is right in either of these conclusions. Gallienus had no notion of the mass of Christian societies forming one Church, and that only was a *religio licita*, which was *established*, not merely *tolerated* by law. The permission granted by the English law to the Socinians, that they may have the free exercise of their worship, and possess their burial-grounds, if they have any, without confiscation, does not amount to the recognition of the Socinians as a corporate, but as a scattered body. If, too, the mere toleration of a religious body constitute their faith a *religio licita*, then every sect, party, and denomination, from the most ancient error to the latest fancy, are all, in England, *religiones licite*. That which we are required, by expediency or principle, to tolerate; cannot be described by the same terms as that which we affectionately or devotionally love. See Kortholt, cap. ix. § 36.

The painful list is closed with the most savage and infamous of the persecutors of the Church<sup>1</sup>. Diocletian, influenced by Galerius, his son-in-law, and by Pagan philosophers, who hated the increasing power of Christianity, seemed to fulfil the declaration, that the principle of evil had come down upon the earth, exercising more wrath than before against the faith of the Gospel, because he knew he had but a short time. Exasperated by the destruction of his palace at Nicomedia, which he imputed to the Christians, and confounding, either sincerely or hypocritically, the doctrines of Manicheism with the truths of Christianity, Diocletian published the most intolerable edicts which had yet afflicted the Church. He commanded the total destruction of the Scriptures wherever they could be found. He punished with death all who assembled for religious worship. He placed the Christians out of the pale of the law. He excluded them from office. He confiscated the property, with which their temples had been voluntarily endowed. He tortured to death the principal teachers and chief professors of religion. He used every means, imprisonment, slavery, and infamy, to induce the Christian to become Pagan, and to destroy utterly the Church of Christ; and so he continued burning, drowning, murdering, and condemning to the prison, and to the mine, till the day of his abdication of the empire<sup>2</sup>. He was seconded in all his cruelties by his equally cruel son-in-law, Galerius, labouring, but labouring in vain, to "curse those whom God had not cursed; and defying those whom the Lord had not defied." So they continued, till the one, as some relate<sup>3</sup>, withdrew from the affronts of those who had been raised by his bounty and favour, by a voluntary death, in his retirement at Salona, where he had been long pursued by fear, anxiety, and sorrow; while Galerius, in the midst of his cruel career, sunk beneath the pressure of disease; and yielding, before his spirit returned to his Maker, to the reproaches of an awakened conscience, published in his own name, and of those of his colleagues in the empire, that edict of toleration which terminated the pagan persecutions, restored the victims of the

Num. xxiii.  
8.

<sup>1</sup> The eminent chronologists, Pagi and Dodwell, disagree respecting the date of this persecution, the former referring it to A. D. 298, the latter to 301.

<sup>2</sup> See Euseb. H. E. viii. 1, 2, and succeeding chapters; Mosheim, de Reb. Gestis Christ. p. 915.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, vol. i. c. xiii. p. 471.

mines and prisons to their homes, and permitted the Christian world to name the name of Christ in triumph, peace, and freedom<sup>4</sup>. Maximin and Maxentius persevered, for two short years longer, in the attempt to re-establish Paganism, till Constantine and Licinius united in the edict of Milan<sup>5</sup>, which secured toleration to opinion, and victory to persecuted Christianity.

Here we end the view of the causes of the persecution of the Christians by their early antagonists; and the first part of the struggles in which the Church of Christ was victorious, as it will be over all the rest of its opponents; and as it will be borne in safety, even through the storms and tempests of its own errors also, conquering and to conquer. From the time when the mistaken zeal of the few, confounded external obedience to the ritual of Moses with the spiritual homage of the heart to God;—till the reign of the accomplished but cruel and implacable Diocletian; they were exposed to the influence of every unworthy motive that could actuate an irreligious ruler, when armed with irresistible power. The love of popularity, in *Herod*; falsehood and cowardly cruelty, in *Nero*; jealousy, in *Domitian*; contempt and scornful lenity, permitting Christianity to be punished as a criminal offence when he professed to protect it, in *Trajan*; indolence and hypocrisy, in *Hadrian*, *Antoninus*, and *Aurelius*; the love of military glory, in *Severus*; revenge, in *Maximin*; hatred, in *Decius*; superstition, in *Valerian*;—whatever was the weakness or the wickedness, the mental strength or the moral virtue, of the emperor; all was alike to the despised and persecuted Christians. They contended against the power of the spiritual enemy, as their divine Master had assured them; and “nothing did by any means so hurt them,” as to extinguish the supporters of Christianity, or prevent its predicted triumph. The conquest of the religion of Jesus over such opposition is the most remarkable phenomenon in the moral history of man. It has ever, too, been justly regarded in this light; and miserable, indeed, is that spirit of infidelity which disguises its aversion to religion under the name of a loftier philosophy; and professes to survey the sufferings and the courage, the faithfulness and the heroism, of the con-

<sup>4</sup> A. D. 311. Euseb. H. E. ix. l. 9.<sup>5</sup> A. D. 313. Id. x. 5.

fessors and martyrs, as proofs of folly or rashness; of enthusiasm or ostentation; or deficiency in mental strength. This was the practice of the disciples of the schools of Lucian, and other banterers of the very age in which they suffered<sup>6</sup>. It was the insult which the wretched stoicism of Antoninus offered, when he directed his heathen disciples to meet death with dignity; unconscious as he was, that the only dignity of a miserable mortal, in meeting his latter end, is the humility of hope and faith prepared to meet its God. This was the affectation of the Deistical historian of the last century, whose baneful influence, together with that of Hume, and the English Deists of an earlier date, has laid the foundation of the corrupt neology of the Continent; the affectation which calls the laws of Moses frivolous or absurd<sup>7</sup>. Gibbon, while he unwillingly demonstrates to the enquirer the truth of the predictions uttered by Christ respecting his disciples, sneers at their patience; insinuates suspicion of their morality; and defending "the humanity of their persecutors, too much forgets his own<sup>8</sup>." This miserable infidel, and those who are like him, sees no fulfilment of prophecy in the mighty events he records; no true greatness in the firmness, endurance, and energy of the converts. To him there is neither truth nor poetry in the question of Dryden<sup>9</sup>; nothing worthy of admiration in the Providence or the Government of the God of Christianity. Every chapter of his work is an anticipation of the remark of Mr. Wilberforce—"That the day seems to be coming, when to be called a Christian will be synonymous with being denominated a fool:" and it is scarcely an unjust reflection on his eloquent and laboured, but sarcastic

<sup>6</sup> Passages from the profane authors, where this spirit is fully indulged, have been collected by Bingham. The subject is treated at great length by Kortholt, in his volume, "*De pagano obrectatore*."

<sup>7</sup> Gibbon's *Roman History*, chap. xvi. p. 225, 4th edition.

<sup>8</sup> This expression is Mr. Wadding-

ton's, a patient, unenthusiastic, frequently eloquent, and always sensible writer. His work is useful, valuable, and laborious. It is never to be popular; because he is too orthodox to be approved by the liberal school of the day; and he is too free, in some of his opinions and remarks, for certain members of his own Church.

<sup>9</sup> Or, how should men of various age and arts,  
In different nations born, in different parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths; or how, or why,  
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie;  
Unask'd their pains, unheeded their advice,  
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price?

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CHAP. I.

and unjust pages to say, that, as he seems to consider every Christian to be a fool; so also does he regard Christianity as an imposition, and immortality a dream. So it is, that if the gems and gold, which the man of taste and learning brings forth from the Egypt of profane and general literature, are not dedicated to the tabernacle of Jehovah in the wilderness of this desolate world; they are sacrificed to the golden calf of infidelity and wickedness, to make the servants of God weep; and the enemies of God dance, and shout with triumph. How much more wise and rational, as well as eloquent and sublime, are the exultations of a Christian theologian, upon the survey of these conquests of the Cross. "Presently it came to pass, that the religion of the despised Jesus did infinitely prevail—a religion that taught men to be meek and humble; apt to receive injuries, but unapt to do any; a religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful, at a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the hearts of all mankind: that such a religion, at such a time, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen—men of mean breeding and illiberal arts—should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world; the power of princes; and the interests of states; against wit and wisdom; superstition and wilfulness; fame and money; nature and empire; which are all the causes in the world that can render an event impossible—this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God; and is the great demonstration of the truth of the religion of Jesus<sup>1</sup>." The view which we have given of the causes of the earlier persecutions, fully justifies this language of our great divine. He is quite right in his declaration, that whatever was for Christianity made it to increase; and whatever seemed to be against Christianity made it to increase. In prosperity, the converts enticed and allured the world, by the beauty of holiness: in affliction and in trouble, they amazed all men with the splendour of their innocence, and the glories of their patience.—This is the language in which we should speak of the great events of the fulfilment of prophecies, and the proofs of the government of the world by the God of Christianity. I would not deprecate criticism, nor object to the most rigid and severe enquiry into the truth of any fact

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Taylor, Works, vi. 417, Bishop Heber's edition.

recorded in ecclesiastical history ; but the dead palsy of infidelity is different from unimpassioned enquiry ; and while the latter must be encouraged to the utmost, as the only solid foundation for belief in that truth which will ever give to the world, and to literature, and to religion, “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,” we must still be careful to shun “that foul philosophy which sins by rule ;” and which, while it professes only to laugh at religious zeal, as the conduct of the fanatic or the enthusiast, destroys all that is great in religion, elevating in sentiment, and noble even in literature itself. This is neither the time nor the place to speak of the general conspiracy against Christianity, among the popular writers of the present age. There seems to be a common understanding among them, that, if they would be acceptable to the public, they must carefully avoid the least allusion to the graver or sublimer topics. Verily they have their reward. In the setting up of every idol—whether literary, or of a grosser kind—the carpenter will encourage the goldsmith ; and he that worketh with the anvil him that smiteth with the hammer : but when the influence of Christianity shall once more prevail among us, the generation that rejoices in its restoration to the public love, will look back with astonishment at the mass of foolish, frivolous, empty, useless volumes, which constitute the fashionable literature of the day. The systematic evasion of all allusion to the spiritual religion of the Gospel, is the staple foundation of them all ; and this evasion is the result of the extension of that indifference to Christianity which proceeds from practical and speculative, though unprofessed and unavowed, infidelity. It is the proof that the opinion begins to prevail with those who would be thought wise in their generation ; that to be a Christian is to give proof of deficiency of knowledge, or weakness of intellect. Let the Christian fear to become one of this school. Let him retain his humility, and be assured, that his folly is wisdom ; while the wisdom of such literature, is folly. Let him remember the words of one of the most illustrious teachers of our age—“The march of [intellect<sup>1</sup>] which leaves the [religion of Christ<sup>2</sup>] in the rear, is an advance like that of our

<sup>1</sup> [mind] Second Edition.<sup>2</sup> [Bible] Second Edition.

BOOK II. first parents in paradise—towards knowledge; but, at the  
CHAP. I. same time, towards death<sup>2</sup>.”

These remarks, I must again observe, are by no means intended to prevent the exercise of that noble spirit of enquiry which demands evidence, if necessary, before it will consent to arrive at the most common conclusions of history. The scepticism to which I have now referred is that which depreciates too much the testimony of antiquity, purposely to destroy, more effectually, the historical argument in favour of Christianity. This was not the object of the learned author<sup>3</sup> who first questioned the truth of the general notion respecting the number of the persecutions, and the amount of the victims in the early Church. We will meet the curiosity which demands an impartial view of the matter, by considering as briefly as possible the whole subject.

“The Church is the mother of martyrs;” and “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church;” were two of the most common sayings of primitive antiquity<sup>4</sup>. The Christian historians of the earlier days rejoiced in the supposed number, as well as in the patience, of the martyrs. They regarded their noble sufferings in the same light as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews viewed the endurance of oppression by the fathers of a still more remote age, when he appeals to the Christians of his own day. They had begun to taste of the same cup of which their Master had drunk, and of which he would only pray—“Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” “Seeing ye are encompassed about,” he says, “with so great a cloud of martyrs, who were stoned, who were sawn asunder; were tempted by torture to apostasy<sup>5</sup>; were slain with the sword of the executioner, as examples of faith and patience;—let us lay aside every sinful encumbrance

<sup>2</sup> Melvill's Sermons, vol. i. p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Dodwell.

<sup>4</sup> The first was the saying, if I remember rightly, of St. Augustin; the second of Tertullian. Ruinart is very angry with Dodwell for rejecting the testimony of general tradition. “Nemo,” he says, “aliquantisper in sanctorum patrum aut historie ecclesiasticæ lectione versatus ignorare posset, hanc Ecclesiæ Catholicæ de martyrum

multitudine traditionem communi semper omnium patrum sententiâ, et ecclesiarum singularum unanimi consensu receptissimam fuisse, Ecclesiam appellat Augustinus martyrum matrem.” —Ruinart, Prief. Gener. § xii. p. xiv.

<sup>5</sup> This interpretation seems to me to reconcile the various criticisms on the word *ἐκπαράθησαν*. See the authorities and remarks in Bloomfield: Note on Heb. xi. 37.

on our way to heaven, and every hampering hindrance of the circumstances of our condition in life; and let us run with patience, also, the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." It was in this sublime spirit that the fathers of the holy Catholic Church estimated the testimony of the martyrs; and it is in this spirit, also, that the members of the Church of England should venerate the pillars of their own Church—Latimer and Cranmer; and Ridley and Hooper; whom it is beginning to be the fashion to despise. The colder custom now is commencing, among many writers of our own Church, to endeavour to diminish the numbers, and smile at the sufferings of our own martyrs; to call in question the truth of the graphic descriptions even of their contemporary biographers; and to apologize for the tyrant, rather than to sympathize with the victim. The controversy respecting the martyrs of the three first centuries resolves itself into two questions—the number of persecutions, and the number of victims. I have already shown, as the foundation to the right answer to these questions, that the uncompromising aggressiveness of the Christians was the cause of their uniform extensive unpopularity among the people, and, therefore, of many unjust edicts, on the part both of their provincial and imperial rulers. The writer in one of our most influential periodicals<sup>6</sup> appears to me to have taken a very partial view of the matter, when he observes, that Christianity was the retired and private worship of multitudes, designated by no peculiar mark or badge; and holding their assemblies in some secluded, or, at all events, undistinguished chamber<sup>7</sup>. It is true, that "the first apologists for Christianity are merely humble and submissive subjects pleading for toleration, and gently expostulating against the severity with which they were treated by the imperial government;" and not, as they afterwards became, "bold orators, arraigning the whole system of the established

<sup>6</sup> Quarterly Review, No. cxiii. p. 344. "The persecution under Trajan," says the writer, "too, appears to have been a provincial affair." This is inconsistent with the account in Euseb. lib. iii. cap. 36, from which it appears that the persecution extended to many cities. Our Lord's advice was, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to

another." As St. Paul went from city to city, and was sometimes persecuted in that to which he fled, as well as in that from which he escaped, so it was with the Christians of the early centuries.

<sup>7</sup> See, even on this point, Mede's Treatise on the First Places of Worship among the early Christians.

BOOK II.  
CHAP. I.

religion, as a monstrous scheme of folly and licentiousness<sup>8</sup>." Yet there can be little doubt that, as the first Apostles and preachers and their followers were not contented with such private and retired worship, but boldly went forth as the champions to attack the dragon in his den, and to defy alike the power and the fire of his breathings; so also would their immediate disciples imitate the heroic model. The writer of an apology is always more timid than the active preacher, unless he be conscious of the strength and approbation of the multitude. He shrinks from bodily suffering, from the habits induced by his seclusion. The first apologists for Christianity, not having the boldness, and "something divine" of inspiration, were weak and timid, until the increasing numbers of the converts encouraged the more animated Tertullian, and others of the same stamp, to be, in their written assailings, what the preachers of their religion had ever been in the assemblies for public worship. The general unpopularity, however, encouraged the injustice of the magistracy; and though many tolerating edicts are recorded by Eusebius, the conclusion to which a fair view of the whole compels us to arrive, is, that as the public law and the popular indignation were both directed against them, it is impossible to tell the number of persecutions. It often happened that Christians were put to death under the existing laws, in spite of the efforts of the emperors occasionally to protect them<sup>9</sup>. Many records of these interferences are lost. The testimony of Origen, who affirms that those who suffered were few, and easily numbered, which at first sight appears to be unanswerable, must be interpreted with reference to his whole argument. The expression was uttered before the carnages by Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian; and they are employed in a contrast between the numbers who survived and the numbers who suffered. The

<sup>8</sup> Burton's History of the Church, chap. iv. p. 84. 167.

<sup>9</sup> Pæce aliquando ab imperatoribus concessâ, delati tamen Christiani punirentur, ut patet ex Apollonii necē, qui capitali supplicio a senatu damnatus est, quod veteri lege sancitum esset, ne Christiani delati impune dimitterentur. Idem Marino contigit Casaree in Palestina, etiam post promulgatum Galienū imperatoris pacis edictum. Si

tamen his legibus nova accedebant imperatorum edicta, tunc maxime persecutio sæviebat, Christiani diligentissime inquirebantur, comprehensissime intolerabilibus afficiebantur suppliciis. Novis autem imperatorum edictis ad Christianos persequendos opus non fuisse patet ex celebri Plinii Epistola ad Trajanum, etc.—Ruinart, Præf. Gener. cii. § xxiv. p. xxviii.

victims were fewer, he argues, than the numerous survivors, who were able to excite the seditions of which Celsus accused them: but from the accusation of so doing, Origen was defending them. In many parts of his works Origen repeatedly refers to the number of victims, and to the general hostility to Christianity, on the part both of the magistracy and the people; and he affirms that many suffered<sup>1</sup>. Tertullian declares, that he did not mention the edicts of those persecuting princes whom the Romans regarded as deserving the homage of the people, as the fathers of their country<sup>2</sup>. Lactantius, who wrote the celebrated treatise on the death of the persecutors, does not lead us to infer, that he has mentioned the names of all; and we may justly, therefore, conclude, as we have done, that the universal hostility, though sometimes checked and suspended, and sometimes encouraged, occasioned such a general state of persecution, that the precise number of persecutions cannot be certainly ascertained. We cannot say, observes Ruinart<sup>3</sup>, that no day elapsed without adding to the number of the martyrs; but we may justly affirm, that the persecutions were constant through the whole period which elapsed between Domitian and Decius, when the more unrelenting hostility began. These incessant persecutions were sometimes local, according to the caprice or will of a magistrate, as the people or the priests required; and sometimes from the especial mandates of the emperors. Every such act of the authorities was the sanction to the populace to display

<sup>1</sup> Dodwell, Waddington, and those who are inclined to the opinion, that the martyrs were but few, have confidently relied on this affirmation of Origen: *ὀλίγοι σφόδρα κατὰ καιροὺς ἐναριθμητοὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν χριστιανῶν θεοσεβείας τεθνήκασιν*.—Cont. Cels. iii. § 8. Opp. i. 452, edit. De la Rue. See the references to his Ninth Homily on Joshua, first and fourth book against Celsus, &c. in Ruinart's *Præf. Gener.* book ii. § xxii. p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Idem fere dicendum de Tertulliano, qui in *Apologetico* Christianorum religionem a pessimis principibus, quorum decreta ipsimet gentiles horrebant, exagitata fuisse probaturus, inter persecutores eos principes recensere non debebat, quos Romani ut patriæ patres, et pssimos imperatores suspiciebant. . . . Denique, etsi idem

Lactantius in *Libro de Mortibus Persecutorum* quinque tantum ex imperatoribus qui Ecclesiam persecuti fuerint enumeret; non inde tamen inferendum est, plures non fuisse persecutiones.—Ruinart, *Præf. Gener.* cap. ii. § xxx. p. xxx.

<sup>3</sup> At licet ultro fateamur, non semper et ubique terrarum persecutiones ita ingruisse ut nulla dies, aut sane nullus annus sine martyrum multitudine abierit; contendimus tamen persecutiones etiam eo tempore quod inter Domitianum et Decium intercessit, frequentes fuisse, aliquando locales ex præsidum genio, aut etiam populorum et sacerdotum tumultu ad eas præsidēs incitantibus; quando etiam ex specialibus principum rescriptis.—Ruinart, *Præf. Gener.* iii. c. xxx. p. xxxv.

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more openly their hatred of Christianity, which reproved and forbade the indulgences which their deities permitted, encouraged, and required.

The number of persecutions which afflicted the primitive Church was long supposed to be precisely ten<sup>4</sup>—an opinion which is said to have been an invention of the fifth century, derived from the arbitrary interpretation of prophecy, rather than historical evidence. Lactantius, in the fourth age, enumerates only six. Eusebius seems to mention nine. Gibbon so ameliorates the supposed severity of the emperors, that though Nero, Domitian, Decius, and others, were sometimes severe, Diocletian is the only persecutor who seemed to be really the subject of reproach<sup>5</sup>. Amiable and candid historian! Dean Waddington is not disposed to impute the blame of deliberate, unrelenting persecution, to more than four or five. If this uncertainty exists with regard to the number of persecutions, it must be evident, also, that there would be no less uncertainty respecting the number of the victims. The numerous declarations, in general terms, by Eusebius, Tertullian, Arnobius, and the apologists; the testimony of nearly all the remaining memorials of antiquity; the accounts of the veneration paid to their memory, and of the honour in which their names were held among their contemporaries and successors; would all lead us to believe that the martyrs were exceedingly numerous; and this conviction was the uniform belief of the Catholic Church, until the time when the opinion was impugned by the learned theologian, whose conclusions have ever since been made the subject of discussion among those who are interested in questions of this nature<sup>6</sup>.

About the year 1682, Dr. Fell, the learned Bishop of Oxford, predecessor to Parker, who was intruded into that see by James II., undertook to publish a new edition of the works of Cyprian; and requested the learned Henry Dodwell to write some preliminary dissertations on various matters

<sup>4</sup> The first who limited the number to ten, was Sulpitius Severus, and the opinion gained ground from a fancied correspondence with the ten plagues of Egypt. See Mosh. de Reb. Gest. Christ. sec. i. § 26.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, vol. i. cap. xvi. p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Kaye, whose opinion is entitled to much deference, adopts the conclusion of Dodwell, the result of whose researches led him to believe, that the number of martyrs had been much overrated.—Bishop Kaye's Tertullian, p. 139.

alluded to by that father. In one of Cyprian's epistles to his clergy<sup>7</sup>, written in his exile from his Church, he begs them to take care that they note the days on which the martyrs suffered, that commemoration might be annually made of their deaths, according to the general custom<sup>8</sup>, on the anniversary of the day on which they suffered<sup>9</sup>. Because there are not so many names, therefore, of martyrs in the ancient monuments of the Church, as might have been expected, Dodwell endeavours to show, that their number in the first persecutions must have been much smaller than was generally imagined; and that the martyrologists and writers of later ages, have multiplied them without the authority of ancient documents. He rests the argument in favour of Christianity deduced from martyrdom, upon the fortitude, readiness to die, and wonderful patience of the martyrs, rather than upon their numbers. He expatiates, in confirmation of this conclusion, upon the circumstances to which I have above alluded, on the paucity of edicts<sup>1</sup>, on the gentleness of some of the emperors, on the cessation of persecution for long periods of time, and other considerations. The publication of the book gave much offence, as it attacked one of the most favourite notions among Christians. It was answered by a Benedictine monk, named Ruinart, of Rheims, in France<sup>2</sup>. The principal arguments of Ruinart are, that the kalendars prove but little; because, every Church possessed its own, which was different from all others, by inserting the names of those

<sup>7</sup> The thirty-fourth in the common editions, but the thirty-seventh in the Oxford edition.

<sup>8</sup> See numerous references to this custom in Bingham, book viii. chap. i. § 9, and book xi. chap. vii.

<sup>9</sup> *Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut meministi, offerimus quoties martyrum passiones, et dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus. Denique, et dies eorum quibus excedunt, annotat, ut commemorationes eorum inter memorias martyrum celebrare possimus, quanquam Tertullus . . . . . significet mihi dies quibus in carcere beati fratres nostri ad immortalitatem gloriose mortis exitu transeunt, et celebrentur hic a nobis oblationes, et sacrificia, ob commemorationem eorum quae cito vobiscum, Domino protegente, celebrabimus.*—Cyp. Epist. xii. p. 27.

edit. Fell.

Dodwell proves that the sacrifices here alluded to were commemorative, not propitiatory; though the language of the sacrificial part of the worship was identified, at a very early period, with the devotional, or more general language of the worship of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> This is the argument in the Eleventh Dissertation—de Paucitate Martyrum; but it is continued in the Twelfth—de Martyrum Prim. Fortitudine.

<sup>2</sup> Ruinart's work was published 4to in 1689. Another, and most beautiful edition, in folio, was given to the world in 1713, printed by Wetstein, in Amsterdam. There is, also, a French translation of Ruinart, by Drouel de Maupertius, Paris, 1708, in 2 vols.

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martyrs only who belonged to its own communion; and did not insert the names of any who were martyred even in the Churches of their vicinity—that in these kalendars they did not insert the names of those who were martyred in the neighbouring cities, or province; and that, even in the kalendars that remain, the names of some martyrs are found, which are not to be discovered in the most approved lists; and therefore, it is probable that there were many more who must continue to be unknown to us in consequence of the loss of kalendars; and many more would have been known if more of such monuments existed. He proves all these points, by many instances, at great length. No work has yet appeared, since the publication of these books, in which the subject of the controversy has been examined at very great length. The whole series of the imperial persecutions is considered; and the conclusion of Ruinart is—that the ancient traditions are to be believed; and that the hypothesis of Dodwell is unsupported. Dodwell admitted the candour and learning of his antagonist, and professed that he would not reply to him, because he was unwilling to expose the weakness or credulity of the ancient writers<sup>3</sup>. The references, facts, quotations, and arguments with which Ruinart concludes his preface, and sums up the evidence, will appear to many to be sufficiently satisfactory to prove, that the belief of the Church respecting the numbers, as well as the patience and fortitude of the primitive martyrs, was correct; and that Gibbon, Semler, Dodwell, and others, are not justified in its rejection.

<sup>3</sup> Brooksby's Life of Dodwell, i. 203.

## CHAPTER II.

*The state of the Primitive Church, at the accession of Constantine the Great.*

THE promotion of union among Christians, as following out the great object of Christ and his Apostles, next to the salvation of the soul, is the design of this work. Before we can hope to arrive at safe conclusions respecting the matters which have been so much controverted among men respecting faith, Church government, Church authority, and Church discipline, it will be necessary to ascertain what is the testimony of primitive Catholic antiquity upon these subjects at the time when Constantine the Great attained to the empire.

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We represented the enquirer after truth ascending from the present age upwards to the time when inspiration ceased and the Church of Christ was left to its own controul—when it was no longer to be guided as an infant, but directed as a thinking and reasoning child by an adult and careful parent. The Providence of God was still to guard and watch over it, and to influence all its proceedings, till the great end of its establishment in the amelioration and conversion of the human race should be accomplished: but that Providence was not to be manifested in the unusual and peculiar mode to which the Church had been accustomed from the birth of the Baptist to the death of the immediate successors of the Apostles. The dispensation under which we still live was now begun, in which the blessed Spirit of the omnipresent God acts upon the human mind, according to the laws of mind; and not in that unusual mode in which the scenes of the future were impressed upon the brain, and spoken of by the tongue, so as to anticipate the history of the future, and demonstrate the power of God. The ordinary powers of the Holy Spirit, which cannot be always distinguished from the efforts of volition, remained with the people who embraced Christianity; and consented by their agreement in faith, government, discipline, and manners, to form societies or churches for their mutual benefit and improvement.

At the time when inspiration ceased, many of these societies were established. It may be useful to inquire in what respects they were unanimously agreed. If we can discover any *doctrines in faith*, any *maxims in government*, any *customs in discipline*, which *were universally received in every Church, by all Christians without exception*, at the very time when the influence of the Apostles was not extinguished by distance of time; but when their example and teaching would be remembered with affection and reverence;—when the personal holiness of the believers was at its height; when the general hostility of the vice-loving Pagans prevented any person from becoming a Christian but those whose faith was sincere;—and, if we can plainly prove and show, that during the two hundred years which elapsed from the death of the last Apostle to the time of Constantine, one system of faith and regulation was received, we should be undoubtedly justified in affirming that such universal reception of an opinion or practice was an argument, to induce us to adopt such opinion, or regulation, second only in power to the appeals which it might please God to make to us, by the raising of the dead to speak to us; or by any other miracle recorded to us, as an evidence of truth. Were any such opinions and regulations universally received?—If they have been continued, or handed down to us without intermission from that time to the present, may they not, in the strict sense of the word, be called traditions, which may be received as arguments why we should still continue among us the doctrines and discipline they record? We shall find there are many, in faith, in government, in discipline, and in manners. We begin with those which relate to *faith*.

The Books of Scripture, as we now receive them, were received by the early Churches as inspired, genuine, and authentic. They were given to various communities who had listened to the instructions of those men, who wrought miracles to prove the truth of their words. They were slowly and cautiously received by these communities. They had been adopted by them before the end of the second century. They are the writings which have been received from that time to the present, on the authority of those evidences which proved them to be of more than human origin to the first generation of Christians; and on the testimony of those generations also. The

universal Church is the keeper and witness of their truth. All profess to be guided by them. They deserve all the eulogy, love, and devotion which admiration, learning, taste, literature, hope of salvation, fear of God, and gratitude to Christ, the reconciler of God to man, have ever, in all ages, lavished upon their beauty, truth, and value. BOOK II.  
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I have asserted, and I do assert, that the Creator of the world has granted to every human being to whom his Providence has imparted the power to think and reason; and the opportunity to cultivate his mind; the privilege of examining whether the propositions which any Church or teacher submits to him, are supported upon evidence sufficient to induce him to receive them. If, then, the Scripture is to be received upon the authority of the first generation of Christians, what room is left for any enquiry but this—why did the early Church, and the early Christians, receive the Scriptures; and am not I required to receive them on the same evidence, which satisfied the primitive Churches of their truth? The same question may be applied to the reception of the *faith* of the early Churches, that is, to the inferences which they derived from the Holy Scriptures. We are bound, we answer, to receive the Scriptures for the same reasons as the primitive Church received them, because of their truth, evidences, and reasonableness. We do not receive them merely on the Church's authority, but on the causes for which that authority sanctioned them; and we make that authority an additional and powerful evidence in favour of their reception, when other evidence is deficient. So it is also with respect to the faith, the doctrines, the inferences deducible from Scripture. We believe the ancient faith, because we believe that the ancient Church deduced it from Scripture rightly. The Scriptures instruct us both. The reasoning which convinced the ancient Church, convinces the modern believer, and the testimony of the Church is only an additional evidence, that his own faith, deduced from the Holy Scriptures, is true. There are, therefore, three classes of persons, who may justly call themselves Christians. Those who believe the Scripture because the Church believed it; those who believe it, partly upon the evidence which satisfied the Church, and partly upon the evidence of the Church itself; and, those who believe it upon evidence, such as it may be, and undoubtedly is, as Lardner has shown, very great even from heathen testi-

monies, and from their internal adaptation to the nature of mind, without depending upon the Church at all. The first class of these is the member of the Church of Rome. The second is the member of the Protestant Episcopal Churches, and many others. The third is the reasoner, who too frequently becomes sectarian, because he places but little or no value upon the testimony of primitive antiquity.

I will illustrate this question of the submission, the right application, or the perversion of private judgment as a co-existing guide to man, with the Scriptures, and with the Church. Mathematical conclusions imply the right of private judgment. Each person must reason for himself, in order to perceive the justice of the several demonstrations. The University of Cambridge believes and teaches that a certain proposition is true. One student believes, without further enquiry, upon the authority of the instructor. Another inquires into the evidence which satisfied the instructor. The third rejects the instructor altogether, and seeks for evidence without him. Is it not evident that the second of these will obtain more mental happiness in the exercise of his faculties in the search of evidence, with due submission to authority; at the same time, that he will be a better student than the first, in his mind; and a better student than the third, in his manners? Just so it is in Christianity. He who embraces Christianity on authority without reasoning, has the religion which may satisfy, but not elevate, the mind. He who rejects authority altogether, is in danger of being misled by his own presumption. He who hears the Church, and is convinced by authority and evidence united; arrives at the just medium between the belief that may be contented with ignorance; and the presumption which may lead to error<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> All our controversies, as I have said, on religious or ecclesiastical subjects, are rapidly resolving themselves, or rather are already resolved, into the questions on the authority of the Church, the authority of Scripture, or the joint authority of Church and Scripture over the conscience. The Church of Rome demands the submission of its people to its own decisions, whether they be consistent with the Scripture or not. The Church of England, and with it all other parties and communions, require such submission, on the plea, that every point in their

faith, discipline, or government, which is not actually expressed in Scripture, is either deducible by fair inferences from the inspired volume, or else is consistent with Scripture; and does not oppose it, nor is opposed by it. The consequence of this mutual contrast between the two sources of religious inferences has been, that while the Church of Rome, on the one hand, has been mentioned in terms of hatred, contempt, and scorn; the Bible itself, on the other, has been subjected to similar detestation and reproach. The decisions of a

Catholic primitive antiquity, then, received the Scriptures. BOOK II.  
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From those Scriptures it derived certain inferences which it

Church, where they are mere inferences, may be wrong. Nothing, therefore, has excited so much indignation among those Christians, who are not Romanists, as the manner in which the silent paper and printing, which constitute the shrine from which the living oracle of God is spoken, have been so profanely and unworthily treated by the advocates of the Church of Rome. The peasant who took up the Bible with the tongs, and placed it on the fire till it was consumed, was approved in our own days by his bishop. The Bible is now desecrated in many parts of the world by the manner in which it is classed with books of the most wicked character; and prohibited by the priest, and burnt by the people. In a town in Ireland, only a short time ago, a young Romanist applied lighted shavings to a New Testament, amid the approving shouts of a surrounding crowd, and burnt it near the door of the palace of the Roman Catholic bishop. During the process, the children were tossing the scattered leaves about, throwing them into a shop, and crying out, "Bible! Bible!" And so it has ever been.—In the dreadful outbreak in Ireland, in 1641, the murderers of the Protestants vented their anger against the copies of the Bible which they found in the houses by burning them, stamping upon them, throwing them into pools and ditches, and declaring that the Bible was the source of all their divisions. If we look to the general histories of the persecutions of the spiritual Church, we shall find that the Bible has been the object of the hatred of all the enemies of its truths. It was so when Antiochus endeavoured to destroy all the copies of the law and the prophets. The heathen emperors commanded the Christians to deliver up their Bibles. Those who did so were called traitors, and were refused by many of their brethren readmission into the communion of the Church. Christians, before and after the time of Constantine, till the decree of the Church of Rome, which forbade the general use of the Bible, were accustomed to the preaching which commanded them to love the word of God as their best portion;

and they rejoiced to follow such teachers as their best good. This law of the Church of Rome completed its cursed influence upon the soul. The Bible became an object of censure by the priest; and of indifference to the people. It was neglected, despised, and hated. To read it was heresy. To desire to read it was suspected heresy. To inflict pain and death upon its readers was a proof of true religion. To destroy the volume itself was devotion. When the Christians of Europe began to throw off the yoke of Rome, the Bible resumed its place in the heart of the religious; and the dislike of the Bible began to be more prominently displayed by their persecutors. In the civil wars of France, the Bibles were burnt at Amiens, Meaux, Sens, and other places. At Angers a well-bound copy was stuck at the end of a halbert, and paraded through the streets amidst execrations on the people who valued it, and then thrown into the river. In Mascon, when Valouques, a Protestant minister, lay killed with many wounds on the ground; the priests, who had every where instigated the people to their outrages; filled his mouth with leaves from the Bible, and thrust other leaves from the Bible into his wounds, and bade him preach and pray. The very same thing was done in Ireland in the dreadful massacre of 1641. The rabble that committed the murders, cut open the mouth of a Protestant clergyman to the ears; thrust the leaves of a Bible into the wound, and bade him now preach, for his mouth was wide enough; and very many other instances of a like nature are afforded us, by the histories of the past.—Certain it is, that the reading of the Holy Scriptures has been abused by many, to inventing many follies in doctrine, and to justifying many errors in conduct; but the whole mass of these is trivial, when compared with the consequences of withdrawing the sacred pages from the people; and substituting in their place the absurdities, the cruelties, and the treacheries of Rome.—Man, without the light of God's Holy Word, may sink into the state of the demon, in whose heart is hatred to truth, mingled with the consciousness of evil. Man,

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embodied in short summaries, or creeds. Faith consists of two parts—the conviction of the importance of right conclusions; and the arriving at the conclusions which are right. Faith, therefore, has two rules—the Scriptures, which guide to the right conclusions, and the creeds which embody those conclusions that are right<sup>2</sup>. This double rule accomplishes all objects. The Churches before Constantine earnestly pressed upon the people the study of the Holy Scriptures: but every Church, generally in very similar expressions, adopted a creed, which served as a summary of the doctrines to be taught by the preachers. Every Bishop in his Church, being independent of all other Churches, and absolute with his presbytery in his own, appointed his own creed, which was, of course, worded exactly in the usual form with others, or very similarly<sup>3</sup>. Without some creeds, or summaries of belief, written or unwritten, no Christian Church could have met together for worship. The various articles of the Apostles' Creed express most fully the substance of the chief inferences from the Scriptures; and may be called the general confession of the faith of the first three centuries. The articles respecting the descent into hell, and the communion of saints, were not included in the creeds till the fourth century. The principal doctrine which all the creeds kept in view, was the divinity of Christ. To maintain this article of the Christian faith against all innovations, changes, and modifications of opinion, the Bishops, teachers, and synods of the Churches, employed the utmost vigilance and activity. That Christ was the eternal Word—that the Word became incarnate—that the Word was God, to create and rule the

with that Holy Word, may rise to the state of the angel; where love to truth is joined to the consciousness of good. The angel may be charged with folly, but not with crime. The demon is charged at once with folly and crime; while he rejects the light which could cure the one and remove the other.

<sup>2</sup> The creed was called the rule of faith by Cyprian, Ep. lxi. and lxxvi., by Tertullian, de Veland. Virgin. cap. i., by the Council of Antioch, in an epistle preserved by Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 30 (p. 360, edit. Reading), in which the expression is, ἀποστάς τοῦ κανόνος, when they condemned Paul of Samo-

sata. Irenæus, lib. i. cap. i. p. 44. All these are ante-Nicene authorities. The references are from the tenth and sixteenth books of Bingham. Fragments of the more ancient creeds, from the ante-Nicene fathers, Cyprian, Irenæus, Tertullian, Lucian, the martyrs under Diocletian, and others, are also given in his tenth book, by Bingham, in the fifth chapter. A larger collection is contained in the Bibliotheca Symbolica, of J. G. Waleh.

<sup>3</sup> See Bingham, book ii. chap. vi. sec. 1, 3, and the whole of book x., on the subject of the ancient creeds, or confessions of faith in the Churches.

world, and was made man, to teach, suffer, and atone; the doctrine which was to the Jew, the great scandal of the faith; and to the infidel, metaphysical, speculating, sceptical, and philosophizing Greek, utter nonsense and folly, as inconsistent with human reason—that Christ was of the same substance, and not of a like substance with the Father—this was the doctrine maintained with the most anxious jealousy, from the testimony of revelation by the early Church. The first heretics, indeed, were the very contrast, in this respect, to those who followed them. They erred by so exalting the divinity of Christ, that they lost sight of his humanity—their followers, in dwelling too much on the humanity, lost sight of the divinity. I do not refer to the Gnostics—the speculators on the origin of evil. Nothing decidedly certain is known of them as a separate and distinct class, or society of heretics. The word Gnostic was applied by the ancients to all who speculated freely on moral, metaphysical, and religious questions. Of the Gnostics some were Jews, some heathens, some dreaming philosophers, some Platonists, some Christians<sup>4</sup>. Yet, of the little of certainty that can be gathered respecting them, we may learn that they ascribed divinity to Christ. Strange to say, they believed in two or more co-eternal principles<sup>5</sup>, and they made Christ one of these. They imagined Him to be one of the highest æons who came down upon earth to release the souls of men from the fetters of matter, that they may return to God. They came to absurd conclusions, as all persons uniformly, without exception, in all ages, do, who permit their imagination and

<sup>4</sup> See especially the laboured account of the Gnostics in Ittigius, de Hæresiarchis, sec. ii. cap. ix. p. 162, edit. Lips. 1690.

<sup>5</sup> See Burton's note on Pearson's note, in his new edition of Pearson on the Creed, vol. ii. p. 22; the notes to Giesler's section on the Gnostics, with the section and the references, vol. i. p. 82. St. Paul is supposed to refer to the Gnostics in Coloss. ii. 9, where he calls Christ the one πλήρωμα, in opposition to that of the Gnostics, who believed that the thirty æons, and all the local and partial deities of the heathens, made up together the plenitude of the deity. (See Whitby.) He is supposed, also, to allude to them in

Titus iii. 9. Hammond points out numerous passages in the New Testament in which their impure conversation is supposed to be alluded to. See his Introductory Dissertation, prefixed to his Treatise, de juribus Episcopatus. Many have believed that Simon Magus was the founder of the Gnostics. Burton, however, has justly remarked, that he was only the first person who introduced the name of Christ into an absurd and irrational system. See Burton's History of the Christian Church, A.D. 31. How mysterious is the Providence of God, which withdrew this learned, useful, laborious, sober-minded scholar from the service of his beleaguered Church!

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reason to blend together in vain efforts to comprehend the God of Christianity, by interfering between the evidences and the simple affirmations of revelation. Saturninus, who lived in 125, declared Christ to be a man in appearance only. Basilides, who flourished at the same time, made Christ to be one of the æons, who was united to the man Jesus at his baptism. Valentinus, who came from Alexandria to Rome about the year 140, represents also Christ to be more than human, and to be one of the æons from the pleroma, who was united to the Messiah to bring back man to the Deity. The most distinguished of his followers were Heracleon, Ptolemy, and Marcus. Simon Magus had previously denied that Christ had a real body; and affirmed that He was a divine emanation. Carpocrates and Cerinthus believed that Jesus was a man, but that Christ was an emanation from God, dividing the object of Christian faith into two beings<sup>6</sup>. "The belief in the divinity of Christ," says Burton, "hindered them from believing that He was born of a human mother<sup>7</sup>." All these persons were called Gnostics. Marcion believed that Christ was not born at all; but that He appeared upon earth as a superhuman being, and immediately assumed his high office of the Saviour of men. The various errors of all these were condemned by the Church. The first person whose name is preserved to us as confounding the persons of the Trinity, and depreciating the nature of Christ, was Praxeas, who was confuted (A.D. 200) by Tertullian. He was followed by Artemon, who was universally condemned as a heretic; by Noetus, who was excommunicated at Smyrna (A.D. 230); by Beryllus, who received his opinions under the influence of Origen, in a Council at Bostra (A.D. 244); by Sabellius, (A.D. 250-260); by Paul of Samosata, who was deposed (A.D. 269), and by Arius, who was condemned at Nice (A.D. 325). In all instances, when a new or strange opinion sprung up among the Christians of this early period, it was carefully discussed, and approved or condemned by the teachers of the Churches as influential individuals; or by

<sup>6</sup> The whole of this subject is elaborately discussed by Ittigius, in the work already cited.

<sup>7</sup> For the account of these heretics and the references, see Lardner's

History of the Heretics, Giesler, Burton's Bampton Lectures, Mosheim, Pearson, and other common authorities.

councils, or synods, which assembled to consider the novelty. The various clauses of the creed are said to have been put together as new opinions were proposed to the approbation or disapprobation of the Church. Thus, because the Gnostics believed in two Deities, the one good, the other evil, the first article of the creed was, "I believe in one God;" because Menander taught that the world was made by angels, therefore, the words were added, "Maker of Heaven and Earth<sup>8</sup>." A reason is thus to be found for the addition of each several clause, either in the Creed, which is now called the Apostles' Creed, or in those which so nearly resembled it, and which are handed down to us in Ecclesiastical History. All were added according as various opinions advanced by speculative men, and considered by the Churches, rendered such addition necessary<sup>9</sup>. Dr. Burton, Bishop Bull, Bishop Burgess, Mr. Faber, and a host of writers, have demonstrated that the ante-Nicene Fathers<sup>1</sup> strenuously maintained the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, as the palladia of the citadel of Christianity; and the solemn decision of the Church in the days of Constantine—that Christ was the same substance, and not the like substance only, with the Father, as it is embodied in the Nicene Creed<sup>2</sup>, has ever remained, and, I trust, ever will remain as the summary of the doctrines, and one rule of faith to Christians, bequeathed to them as an invaluable legacy from Catholic primitive antiquity.

From the faith of the universal Church, let us consider its observance of the sacraments, of baptism and the Eucharist. The one sacrament was considered an introduction to, the other as the continuation of, a spiritual life, as well as an ad-

<sup>8</sup> See Basnage, Exercit. in Baron. p. 476, ap. Bingham, book x. chap. iii. sec. vii.

<sup>9</sup> This idea is well worked out by Peter Lord King, in his History of the Apostles' Creed. 8vo, Lond. 1703.

<sup>1</sup> Burton's Testimony of the ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ. 8vo, Oxf. 1829.

Bull's "Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ trium primorum Seculorum de necessitate credendi quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus sit verus Deus."—Opp. fol. Lond. 1703.

Bishop Burgess's Tracts on the Di-

vinity of Christ. 8vo, Lond. 1820.

Faber on the Apostolicity of Trinitarianism. 8vo, Lond. 1832.

All the ancient fathers of the Church, to whom the Greek language was their native language, and all the Latin fathers, with one exception, bear the most unequivocal testimony to the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ.—Bp. Burgess's Testimonies to the Divinity of Christ, p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> See, on the subject of the Council of Nice, the work of Newman on Arianism.

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mission into, and remaining in the external communion of the Church. Baptism was called regeneration, as it was regarded to be a second, and spiritual birth; "and a change not of outward, but of spiritual state, circumstances, and relations." It was believed, that the sprinkling of the water, and a peculiar blessing from the head of the Church, were simultaneous acts; so that the child which was admitted by the outward act into the visible Church, was instantly admitted into the spiritual Church. As evil had been predicated of an infant which had committed no sin; holiness was now predicated of an infant which had done no act of righteousness<sup>3</sup>. The mercy of God was believed to be so extended to it, that the child which was baptized was regarded by the Almighty in a more favourable view than the child which was unbaptized. It was taken into covenant as a member of that society which was chosen out of mankind; and placed in a state of greater favour with God, than their brethren of the human race. This distinction, it was believed, could not be made without the impartation of some peculiar grace, favour, or blessing, to the spirit of the baptized; and that blessing is called the grace of baptism, the regeneration, the second birth, the new birth from an uncovenanted to a covenanted state. It was a peculiar act of Deity. It was a mystical, indescribable, undefinable influence bestowed upon the baptized person. This influence did not combine with the ideas of the mind, for there were none. All our earliest ideas are but pictures of the forms of things derived from sensation and perception; and an infant has no development of either. The grace of baptism, therefore, is a grace which cannot be defined. It is the blessing which makes that unconscious being which before was relatively unholy before God, now relatively holy. As we are accustomed to say of an infant which has committed no evil, that it is born in sin; we now say of an infant which has done no good, that it is born from above. As it was before a child of nature, it is

<sup>3</sup> Waterland, quoted in the Preface to Bp. Bethell on Baptismal Regeneration. I give no references except to Bethell; Faber's "Treatise on the Holy Spirit," a book worthy of every commendation; and Bingham, book xi. chap. i. sec. 3, &c. The discussion is interminable. All parties, however,

agree in these two propositions, which may be taken as the foundation of union, that a baptized child is in mysterious spiritual relation to God, different from that of the unbaptized; and that the baptism of water is not, alone, that sanctification, which renders the soul fit for heaven.

now a child of grace. It is in this sense that the Church of England pronounces a baptized child to be regenerated in baptism. BOOK II.  
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This view of baptism, however, has given much offence in later days; and another meaning has been given to the word 'Regeneration' than that adopted by the early Christians. The word has been supposed by many, within the last three centuries (for the Catholic Church through fifteen centuries, certainly, whether rightly or wrongly, identified baptism with regeneration), to denote that act of the Holy Spirit by which it so operates upon the human mind, as to produce new combinations of ideas already in the mind, and new directions of the moral capacities and powers; so that the understanding is convinced, the direction of the will changed, and the affections are devoted to good rather than to evil. This act of the Holy Spirit is called the beginning of sanctification by those who believe baptismal regeneration. If it be rightly so called, regeneration certainly cannot be baptismal. In both senses regeneration is the beginning of the Christian life. The most profound metaphysician cannot fully explain the subject. It may, however, be thus illustrated. A human parent loves his child with equal love, both before and after his mental capacities are developed. In the first case, he promotes the comfort of the child by attending to its bodily health without providing immediately for its spiritual health; because it is impossible he should do so. In the second case, he provides both for the bodily and spiritual health, because the development of the powers of the mind of the child enables him to give it actual instruction. God is our Father. The baptized infant is more peculiarly his child than the unbaptized. Whatever peculiar blessing could be given to the baptized child consistently with those laws of mind which God Himself has framed, we believe that God now bestows; and whatever that blessing be, it is the grace bestowed in baptism, so that the child may be said to be regenerated. When the powers of the mind expand, then God, as a father, so blesses the education, instruction, and incipient means of grace, that the baptized child is sanctified from the earliest period. The subsequent relapses of a Christian in the contest between good and evil within, which goes on from the cradle to the grave, his subsequent recoveries, his weakness

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and repentance, his follies and his prayers, only demonstrate to the thoughtful the truth of the doctrine of the fall; and prove to him that while he is neither an angel nor a devil, he is still a corrupt and sinful being requiring all that God has done, or Christ has suffered, or the Holy Spirit effected, to restore him to his original form in the image of God, and to enable him to attain to his promised place among the conquerors of inward evil.

The second principal institution of primitive Christianity is distinguished by the title of the Eucharist, or sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The principal, though ever mysterious and difficult doctrine of the one true religion, in all its stages, is that of the necessity of an atonement for the commission of actions, and for the indulgence of affections, which the God of revelation has declared to offend Him; and which are therefore called—not vice, nor folly, nor crime, though all these are necessarily included, but sin. Sin is the offence of an unchanged heart against the revealed will of a Deity. If there had been no revelation, there had been no knowledge of sin, and therefore, no thought of atonement. Sacrifice, in some form or other, is the divinely appointed rite which commemorates the doctrine of atonement<sup>4</sup>. The Son of God, before He went out to be the true sacrifice, and to complete the mysterious atonement which was to reconcile man to God, by the pardon of sin, and by the procurement of the Divine power which was to change man, commanded the observance

<sup>4</sup> Sacrifices were offered in the very earliest ages. The reasonings of the learned and venerable Faber, Witsius, Magee, and others, convince me they were of Divine institution. They could not otherwise have been so universal, nor so evidently emblematical of the one only great and true sacrifice, in which we all believe. It seems to be utterly impossible that our first parents, at the very moment too when they possessed the Divine instructor, who appeared to them in the garden in the cool of the day, could have invented a plan of worship which appears to be, at first sight, so very unreasonableness and absurd, as the thought of propitiating the Deity by the outpouring of the blood, and by the subsequent burning on the altar of the better portions of the flesh of an animal. The very irrationality, according to our natural

reason, of its acceptableness to God, and its perfectness as the type of the future, are the demonstrations of its Divine origin; and a proof, also, that with the sacrifice was connected the idea of the necessity of atonement, the one peculiar truth of revelation, together with the necessity of prayer and holiness, and the influence of a Divine power upon the soul. If religion be one and the same in all ages, it must have taught the same truths of faith, hope, and spirituality, though with different degrees of clearness, and in different manners.

“Usque ad sacerdotium Aaron omnes primogeniti ex stirpe Noe, cujus series et ordo describitur, fuerunt sacerdotes, et Deo victimas immolarunt.”—Jerome, *Epist. ad Evagr.* Opp. iii. 355. fol. Ant. 1578.

of an institution which was to be the perpetual memorial of his death ; the commemoration of his approaching sacrifice ; the means of imparting to the recipients both the conviction of the pardon of sin ; and the comfort resulting from the consciousness of acceptableness with God ; together with that intimate and spiritual communion of the soul with its Maker, which is called eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ. As the body is strengthened by the bread, and refreshed by the wine, so the soul was strengthened by the partaking of the commemorative sacrifice of the body of Christ, and refreshed by the drinking the representative of this shedded blood. "This is my body," He said, "the body of the true sacrifice ; and not the body of the paschal lamb, which is its emblem. It is given for you, that you may be pardoned. This is my blood of the new covenant of grace and peace from God, upon the faith and prayer of man, which is shed for the remission of sin. Drink ye, all, of this cup ; and do so in remembrance of me:" and twelve centuries elapsed before the cup was forbidden to the worshipper<sup>5</sup>, to be confined to the priest alone. It is not necessary to enter in this place upon the discussion, whether the Eucharist ought to be considered much more than a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ. Among the patriarchs and the Jews, the highest veneration was paid to the rite of sacrifice. It was regarded by them as a solemn federal agreement between God and man ; and nearly all acts of worship were expressed in language derived from the use of sacrifices. The consequence has been, that the Eucharist, which is of the nature of the sacrifice, in respect both of the oblation, or offering of the bread and wine, as if a pure pascha upon the altar of their subsequent consecration, and of their being eventually consumed by the worshippers—has been frequently called a sacrifice. Cudworth represents it to be a feast upon a sacrifice. Dr. Mede, in his *Treatise on the Christian sacrifice*, proceeds further:—As the materials of the ancient sacrifices were first offered as a thanksgiving ; then consecrated ; and, then finally consumed by the worshipper, who was supposed to be the partaker of the feast with the invisible Deity to whom

<sup>5</sup> Bingham, xv. 5. 1 ; see also Cas- edit. Par. 1616 ; Payne on Communion, sander's *Treatise*, "de Sacra Commu- in one kind, in Gibson's *Preservative*, nione in utraque specie," Opp. p. 1015, ii. 102, tit. vii. chap. iii.

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it was offered, such the learned theologian in question endeavours to prove the Christian eucharist to be. He affirms, that the eucharist may be called an oblation of thanksgiving and prayer, through Jesus Christ, commemorated in the bread and wine which had been first offered to God to acknowledge Him the Lord of the creature; and then, that this sacrifice was placed upon the altar in commemoration only of Christ's sacrifice, and not in a real offering of his body and blood anew. He shows all this principally by referring to the fathers of the second, third, and fourth centuries; and from explaining, in a sacrificial sense, certain passages of the Old and New Testament<sup>6</sup>. In the Church of England, which generally follows the best practices of antiquity with much exactness wherever they are worthy of imitation; the bread and wine are ordered to be placed upon the altar by the priest himself as the sacrifice of acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and benevolence; and they are subsequently consecrated to be eaten by the communicants. Much controversy has existed at all times upon this point. It must be sufficient here to say, that the true and proper notion of every sacrifice, both before and after the coming of Christ, is that of a substitute for the one real, only, acceptable, heavenly sacrifice to God. As Christ, the Great Sacrifice, however, has now been offered, no substituted sacrifice in the real and true sense of the word can now be necessary. Christ, the true sacrifice, has been once for all offered. That sacrifice is "the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and oblation;" and no other sacrifice upon earth is now required but the sacrifice of our bodies and souls in spiritual worship at all times, and more especially in the communion of the Lord's table; when the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in an heavenly and spiritual manner; and the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the commemorative supper, is the faith which leads us to the

<sup>6</sup> Mede has written another treatise, in which he endeavours to prove that the term *θυσιαστήριον* was given to the holy table. His first authority, however, is Tertullian, who flourished about one hundred years after the death of St. John; and, therefore, after the close of the Apostolic age. I do not, therefore, acknowledge this

writer to be of sufficient weight to induce me to believe, that the sacramental table was either originally, wisely, properly, or necessarily called by that name.

The name altar, or *θυσιαστήριον*, anciently given to the holy table.—A College Chapel Discourse, 4to, London, 1637.

altar, and is the principle which justifies the soul. I add here, also, that the Christian minister who serves in sacred things is not called a priest in the sense of sacrificer, but as an elder among the people<sup>7</sup>.

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We will consider the mode of praying adopted by the English Church. All nations who worship God, do so by offering Him prayer and praise. Discussions have arisen among Christians within the last three centuries on the best mode of performing this duty. Some have imagined that the devotions of a congregation should be conducted in the same manner as those of a private individual; and that the minister should express the wishes of the hearts of the people by uttering the desires of the soul, as the thoughts present themselves to his own mind. Others have taught, that the feelings of weakness and unworthiness, of awe and reverence, of gratitude and love towards God, are, or ought to be, the same in every creature; and as there is but one Scripture to teach them, one God to rule, one Saviour to atone, one Holy Spirit to teach by influencing their affections, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one earth to receive their corruptible bodies, one heaven to hope for, and one hell to dread—and as every prayer they can offer must arise from belief in these things,—that the general devotion, therefore, of a people should be uttered in one general well-known form of prayer. They have thought that the language of private devotion may safely and properly be left to the choice of the worshipper; who may express before the Almighty the variations of his hope, fear, love, repentance, and rejoicings; but that, as the faith of Christians is common and general to all, there should be one solemn prayer, whether consisting of one unbroken series of paragraphs; or varied with alternations of responses, singing, reading the Scriptures, and preaching; and that all these should be expressed in language known to all, that all may offer the same devotion to their God. They have thought that peace and union would be promoted in the churches by the banishment from public worship of all accidental allusions to passing events, or controverted topics; while the religion of the heart would be confirmed, and God would be equally honoured. The practice of the early Church sanctions the latter opinion more than the former. I shall mention but three

<sup>7</sup> πρεσβύτερος, not ἱερεύς.

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circumstances which may appear to prove the truth of the assertion. One is taken from the commencement, one from the middle, one from the termination, of the three first centuries.

At the commencement of the Christian worship among the followers of Christ, and before the Gentiles were converted, and when the Jews in their synagogues were accustomed to a great variety of fixed modes of expressing their devotions<sup>8</sup>;—not only had John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray, and not left them entirely to themselves, as the Rabbins also were accustomed to give their disciples short forms of prayer,—but Christ gave the prayer which they were to repeat when they prayed; and after the model of which, also, they were to form their own prayers. Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory, all declare that the Lord's Prayer was intended as a form; and regarded, and used as such, in the Churches from the very time of the Apostles<sup>9</sup>. The expression of Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, may prove to us that the custom was continued to his time<sup>1</sup>. Ignatius, in the beginning of the second, the same century, brought into the Church of Antioch the alternate mode of singing, together with hymns to the honour of Christ, which Paul of Samosata removed, to his subsequent condemnation; and Justin Martyr speaks of common prayers, though in a manner which is referred to by all parties as demonstrating that liturgies were, and were not used<sup>2</sup>. Both

<sup>8</sup> The blessing of the priests, Num. vi. 23—26; the deprecation of the Divine displeasure for an accidental homicide, Deut. xxi. 8; the prayer at offering the first fruits, Deut. xxvi. 3. 5. 10. 13. 15, were all forms of prayer. David, on removing the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, composed a form of prayer: compare 1 Chron. xvi. 7—36, with Psalm cv. 1—15, and xevi. 1—13; cxxxvi. 1, and cvi. 47, 48. So also did Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 30, and Ezra; Ezra iii. 10, 11. The hymn which our Saviour sang was part of the great Hallel, in the temple service. As Lightfoot has shown, forms of prayer were used on every day of the week; and Pridcaux has collected, at length, the synagogue service, which consisted of three com-

ponent parts, as in the Christian worship—prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching or expounding them; and their public prayers were all stated forms.—See Bingham, book xiii. chap. iv.

<sup>9</sup> See the references at length in the London Cases, where the whole question of liturgies is fully discussed; Bingham, book xiii.

<sup>1</sup> “*Carmen dicere*,” is the expression which both Vossius and Brissonius, ap. Bingham, prove to signify a solemn form of prayer.

<sup>2</sup> The expression of Justin Martyr, to which both parties refer, is, *ὅσην δύναμιν ἀνέσθ*, which some interpret, ‘according to his ability.’ Others, ‘with all his might,’ or ‘with the utmost fervour’ (see Heylin’s Tracts, p. 106);

Jews and Heathens were accustomed to forms of prayer, and there appears to be sufficient testimony to induce us to believe, that while *extemporaneous* prayers were offered on certain private occasions, as they may always justly be, the general public devotions were offered in language and in forms which were known to all, as the one prayer offered in the Church, to which the worshipper might belong.

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The argument derived from the middle of the first three centuries is twofold; one from the custom of the bishops in each Church to provide a prayer or liturgy, as well as sermons for the people, which consequently varied, in some measure, in each Church, and may account, therefore, for the perpetuation of fragments of liturgies only among our ecclesiastical historians; and the other from the remains of the liturgy of St. James, which was of so much authority, that Cyril of Jerusalem, at the end of the third century, wrote a commentary upon it for the use of the Christians of his day. From that time to the present the use of liturgies has been constant in the services of the Churches till *extemporaneous* prayer was first introduced into England in public worship, in the reign

and because Tertullian affirms, that Christians did pray "sine monitore," without a monitor or prompter, because they did pray from their hearts; some think he alludes to a custom of the heathen, who, in their public worship, had a monitor to direct them in what words and to what god they were to pray. Since the Christians prayed without a monitor, they say they pray without any one to direct them what form of words they were to pray in. To which we answer—first, that "without a monitor" cannot signify, without any one to dictate a form of words; for, in their public prayers, the minister was the mouth of the people; and, therefore, whether he prayed by form or extempore, his words were a form to the people. Whatever, therefore, this obscure phrase means, it is certain it cannot mean *without a form*, unless it means without a minister too. Secondly, it seems most probable, that "*without a monitor*" means, without any one to correct them when the people repeated, or the minister recited, the public prayers falsely; for the heathen priests began their sacrifices with a form of

prayer—an invocation of Janus and Vesta, and proceeded with the invocations of all the greater deities by name. Now that none of the greater gods might be omitted, and none of the prayers falsely or disorderly recited, or repeated, one priest read out of a ritual, and another was appointed for a public monitor, to oversee and correct such mistakes as might be made. When, therefore, Tertullian says, we pray "*without a monitor*," his meaning is not, that we pray without a priest to dictate our prayers to us, whether out of book or extempore, but that we pray without one to oversee and admonish the priests or people when they dictate or repeat falsely; because, he says, we pray from our hearts, that is, either by joining our affections and desires with the priest, without repeating the words, or by saying our prayers by heart, so that we need none to correct us. For Tertullian affects to express the Greek, and therefore it is probable that his *de pectore*, and 'from the heart,' may be a translation of ἀποσηθηζειν, which signifies, 'to say by heart.' See Bingham, xiii. v. § 5; Kaye's Tertul. p. 407. Heylin's Tracts, p. 107.

of Elizabeth, by Romish priests assuming the disguise of Presbyterian, or sectarian objectors to the Reformed liturgy of the Anglican Church <sup>3</sup>.

The evidence at the close of the third century which proves that liturgies, or forms of prayer, were in constant use in the Church, may be derived from the account which Eusebius gives of Constantine. He commanded his heathen soldiers to pray for him in a previously composed form of prayer; and he directed his Christian soldiers to attend the prayers of the Church, and to follow his example. He then repeated prescribed prayers with all his family <sup>4</sup>.

The Scriptures were read in the churches. Preaching, the custom in the synagogues, and the peculiar labour of Christ and all his Apostles, was the office of the bishop, presbyter, and teacher; and especially of the former, from the first institution of Christianity until the present day. Thus the faith of the early Churches was enforced by Scripture, summed up in creeds, shown forth in sacraments, expressed in worship, and explained in preaching precisely as it is at present. The Scripture was not locked up from the people, or read by the permission only of the priest. The creeds were known to all. The sacraments were two in number, and the cup in the eucharist was given to all <sup>5</sup>. Worship was offered to God and Christ, in language understood by all, and received by all as the well-known ritual common to all Churches, or decreed for use in any particular Church by the principal teacher and ruler of that Church; and preaching was regarded as the duty of the minister, and welcomed as the best form of instruction by the attentive, and enquiring people.

The government of the Church was partly by the bishops, or principal teachers in each society, and partly by synods or representative assemblies composed of delegates from the

<sup>3</sup> I am speaking of things well known to the readers and students of the history of the controversies of the past; things never denied, and regretted by all parties; but which are warnings and beacons to future generations, never to permit the party questions of the age in which we live, to induce us to compromise the immutable principles of usefulness and truth.

<sup>4</sup> μελετημένην εὐχὴν, Euseb. de Vita Constant. lib. iv. cap. 19, ap. Bingham, book xiii. c. v. § 7, and c. xvii. εὐχὰς ἐνθίστους. I beg the reader to peruse this thirteenth book of Bingham, for the abundant evidence of antiquity upon this subject.

<sup>5</sup> See Bingham, xv. cap. v. The subject has been already alluded to.

chief Churches of a district, province, or of the whole civilized world. These councils or synods were gathered together by mutual consent, at the summons of any bishop, to discuss controverted points, and to submit the conclusions of any particular Church to the approbation of the universal Church. Whenever any new opinion attracted general attention, and divided the Christian world into parties, the heads of the various societies assembled to consider the several arguments by which it was defended or opposed. The first council, properly so called, was that at Jerusalem, at which the Apostles and the teachers, who were the first converts, came together to consider the propriety of enforcing certain rites of the Mosaic law, upon the Gentiles who became Christians. The first heresies, however, were opposed, refuted, and gradually became extinct without the assistance of any recorded councils; by the efforts of the bishops and their brethren alone. The Scriptures having been just completed, and the teaching of the Apostles and of those upon whom a superhuman power, when necessary, had rested, being still remembered; the false doctrines of the Carpocratians, Basilidians, Valentinians, and others, were met and refuted by the instructors of the people; as those who had troubled the Churches in the days of St. Paul were rendered uninfluential, by the labours of the Apostle and his coadjutors. Whether it would have been better for the Church that all the new opinions which have risen in various ages had been left, in the same manner, to flourish or die away, according to their truth or falsehood, as these were made manifest by the arguments and reasonings of the inspired or uninspired ministers of God, is a question which need not be discussed at this moment. The errors of those heretics were regarded as roots of bitterness springing up to trouble the Churches. They were looked upon with horror by all Christians who considered the authors of them, and likewise those that maintained them; as persons already excommunicated, and separated from the Church, without the solemnity and trouble of convening a synod to excommunicate them by name. Every bishop instructed his people in the true faith of the Church, and confuted all sorts of errors by the authority of Scripture and tradition <sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> See Du Pin, i. 192.

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The custom of calling and holding synods, which has been attended with decisions and results which still agitate and divide the Christian world, began to prevail extensively in the Christian Churches at this time. Mosheim attributes the summoning the councils, but without sufficient foundation for the opinion, to the imitation by the early Christians of similar assemblies in the Grecian cities. Others consider the assembling of the councils of Hierapolis, Aquileia, &c., against the Montanists, to be the commencement of the Christian councils. I cannot, however, but consider the usual opinion to be the most correct; and to assign their commencement to the assembling of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem to consider the question whether the converts to the religion of Christ were to be subjected to the ritual law. The history of the councils, especially those which were composed of bishops and presbyters from all parts of the Christian world, may be called the history of Christianity generally. What I shall have to say respecting the origin of the power of Rome, and the means of promoting union among Christians, cannot be understood nor proposed, unless we fully understand the objects and the results of the various more important councils. I purpose, therefore, to devote much attention to this point; and to submit the principal information which may be deemed essential to the elucidation of the history of the Church, in a tabular form to the reader. He will be thus enabled to go through the history step by step. I shall arrange the information respecting these councils under the several heads of the name of the council; its date; the number of bishops who attended its sittings; by whom the council was summoned; who sat as the president; against what opinions it was called to legislate; against what persons; its chief decrees; the penalties it enforced; the victims, or sufferers, under its enactments; the emperors; and the bishops of Rome. We will begin with the council of Jerusalem, which is remarkable in its difference from those which followed it, in that it inflicted no penalties, anathematized no heretics, sanctioned no persecution. It assembled, deliberated, decided, and decreed; and then left the Church to adopt its decrees, as the Churches might be convinced it was right and necessary to do so. Their decrees were delivered to be kept, and they became a law to the Churches; but imme-

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See Acts xvi.  
1—3.

diately after they were enacted, they were dispensed with by an Apostle himself when he considered that their non-ob- servance was more useful to the Churches than strict adhe- rence to the letter of the decree. This, too, was done by that Apostle who delivered the apostolic decrees to be ob- served by the Churches. The general law was dispensed with when the spiritual benefit of the converts appeared to require its neglect. The unity of the spirit was preserved, without regarding those teachers as heretics who violated the unity of the letter.

Council.	Date.	Number of Bishops.	By whom summoned.	President.	Against what opinions.	Against whom.	Chief De- crees and Canons.	Penalties.	Sufferers.	Emperor.	Popes.
JERUSALEM.	A. D. 51.	The Apostles and Elders of Jerusalem.	Probably St. James.	St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem.	Because certain Jews taught the converts that they should obey the law of Moses if they hoped for salvation.	The Judaizing Christians.	To abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood.	None.—The council concluded in the manner in which all the other subsequent councils ought to have terminated. It deliberated and decided. It then recommended the Churches to adopt their decision (Acts xv. 23—29), and concluded their letters against the errors then condemned, with the words, “from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.” So it ought always to have been. Liberty was united to truth, and peace blessed the Churches.	None.—As there were no penalties, there could be no sufferers.	Claudius.	Peter was at Jerusalem. (Acts xv. 7.) There were probably Christians at Rome, but we have no evidence sufficiently satisfactory to prove that St. Peter was summoned from Rome, where he is said to have been bishop, to preside in the Council at Jerusalem. See Butler’s Life of St. Peter, page 29, where this point is fully discussed.

Synods and councils began to be every where held in the second century<sup>7</sup>. There may have been many councils in the various provinces of the empire, of which no mention has been made in history, because the Council of Nice<sup>8</sup>, which

<sup>7</sup> It appears, from the fragments embodied in his history by Eusebius (v. 16), that various synods or councils were held in Asia respecting the heresy of Montanus, concerning some probably of which no information has reached us. See J. L. Ruelius, Concil. Illustr. i. 283, and Baluz. Nov. Collect. Concil. p. 3, seq.  
<sup>8</sup> This is decreed in the fifth canon of the Council of Nice. It is there ordained, that sentence of excommuni-

cation, which must by this time have become a matter of serious importance, in consequence of the increasing number of Christians, should be pronounced by the bishop only. But enquiry should be made from what motives the bishop pronounced sentence. That this might be more effectually done, provincial synods were to meet twice every year. The eighth canon of the Council of the Trullus (a large room in the emperor’s palace at Constanti-

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confirmed the ancient customs of the Church, directed that two councils should be summoned in the Churches every year. The same enactment is to be found in the collection of the very ancient laws of the primitive Church, which is called the Apostolical Constitutions; and which, whatever be their authority or estimation, at present, are worthy of consideration on account of their undoubted antiquity, and of their influence in the early Church before the Christian faith was corrupted by many errors, and Christians themselves were made worldly by numbers and prosperity. The first recorded council, however, after that at Jerusalem, was held at Hierapolis in the reign either of Commodus or Severus, A.D. 171 to 173, against the Montanists. Montanus, the founder of this sect, so called, was a converted heathen priest of Cybele. The Christians being in a state of persecution under imperial edicts, in the reign of M. Aurelius, were deprived of the power of holding councils. This was probably the reason that they did not previously condemn Montanus, who began to teach about the year 156. Montanus was not a speculator into the mystery of the revealed nature of the Deity as other heretics had been. He was the first enthusiast. He taught the people that a larger share of the gifts of the Holy Spirit rested upon him than upon any others. Silly women, neglecting their homes, forsaking their husbands, and plead-

nople, so called from trullium, a bowl, which it resembled), decided, that a synod of bishops should be called in each province once only in every year. There was at this time no power of appeal from a provincial synod to a bishop of another diocese. Provincial synods were as a jury to a clergyman. Religion always produces liberty, and discussion is of the very essence of liberty. See *Biblioth. Juris Canonici*, by Voellus and Justellus, i. 30, fol. Par. 1661; *Biblioth. Concil.* v. 324; *Labb. Concil.* i. 1136.

On the authority of the Apostolical Constitutions, and for the value of the ancient canons and laws of the Church, affirmed to be prior to the Council of Nice, the evidence on which they rest, the extreme opinions respecting them, the reasons for believing that they were the results of deliberations of synods in the second and third centuries, the regard paid to them by the

fathers in the fourth century, the light thrown upon them by the Councils of Nice and Antioch, of Trullo and Constantinople, the manner in which subsequent decrees of emperors, fathers, and councils, were apparently founded on them, their defence against modern opponents, the allusions to various early synods contained in them, the authority of the traditions on which they rest, with their decisions on Lent, the Eucharist, baptism, and the other matters, see Beveridge's valuable work, "*Codex Canonum Ecclesie Primitivæ vindicatus et illustratus*," 4to, Lond. 1678.

It is certain that the fifth canon of the Council of Nice refers to some prior well-known canon, which it only confirms: *κρασιτω η γνώμη κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τὸν διαγορευόντα*. See *Bruns. Canon. Apostolor.* i. 15, 8vo, Berl. 1839.

ing internal inspiration as the justification of the folly, which had alone made them imagine that God exempted them from known and humbler duties, to assume the higher office of prophetesses in his Church, followed him through the provinces of the East. They spake many absurdities, prescribed new and rigorous fasts, magnified the virtue of celibacy over the observance of honourable marriage, punished offenders with greater severity than the good of society, the proper criterion of the just extent of punishment, demanded; and predicted a millennium which revelation had not anticipated. They called themselves the spiritual, the pure, the saints, the apostolical. Without unchurching their brethren, they considered their brethren to be the imperfect and themselves to be the more perfect Christians. They were ridiculed by many who went to the most unjustifiable extremes in opposing them. After Montanus had continued for some time to teach and preach in this manner, and when his opinions had at length attracted much attention in the principal provinces both of the East and West; the governors and chief persons in several Churches in Asia Minor resolved to hold a meeting, and deliberate on the best mode of proceeding. After some opposition on the part of the friends of Montanus<sup>9</sup>, a synod was called at Aquileia, and the conduct of Montanus was condemned; and the same thing was done in other places where the same doctrines had made progress. The Bishops of Asia met soon after at Hierapolis, and condemned Montanus and his followers, not of heresy but of preaching a false revelation, and declaring themselves to be prophets when they were not. They were excommunicated as unworthy of remaining in the communion of the Church. Other assemblies of Eastern bishops were called in Phrygia and elsewhere. Apollinaris presided over the meeting at Hierapolis. The sentence of excommunication was imparted, according to the custom of the time, to the various Christian Churches

<sup>9</sup> The reader is referred to Lardner's *History of Heretics*, 4to, A.D. 1780, pp. 388—406, and to the usual authorities among the writers of ecclesiastical history; but especially to a work bearing the title, "The Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised," in a Sermon preached before the University of Oxford. The fourth edition, much enlarged. By

George Hickes, D.D. The preacher of the sermon was the celebrated non-juror. See too the *History of Montanism*, by a lay gentleman—and, the *New Pretenders to Prophecy examined*, by N. Spinekes, a Presbyter of the Church of England: London, 8vo, 1709.

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in other parts of the world, but it was passed without consulting the Bishop of Rome or any but the bishops of Asia.

Montanus, however, refused to submit to the sentence which had been passed upon him. He proceeded to do that which had never been done at that early period, though it is now the most usual and common practice with all proposers of new opinions. He had abused his Christian liberty to slander his brethren and exalt himself by pretensions which it is difficult to imagine he could believe to be true; and he now resisted the sentence of excommunication, and without charging one error of doctrine, one act of tyranny in discipline, or one encouragement to evil, on the universal Church;—without finding one fault also with the bishops and people, excepting their refusal, after evidence had been examined, to believe his pretensions to the influence of a greater portion of the Holy Spirit than his brethren, he proceeded to form a new Church, and to anathematize the judges who had condemned him<sup>1</sup>; an act which began the first schism in the universal Church, and which induced the writers of the time to accuse them of schismatical heresy.

When the errors of Montanus were first broached, Soter was Bishop of Rome. He is said, but the evidence does not justify the affirmation, to have written against Montanus. Soter was succeeded in the year 176 by Eleutherius, who is thought, by Pearson and Cave, to have favoured him. Here also the evidence is insufficient. Eleutherius was succeeded, in the year 192, by Victor, whose “indefectibility of authority” was rendered very dubious by his unwarrantable approbation of Montanus<sup>2</sup>.

The Churches of Asia had not only excommunicated Montanus without consulting the Bishop of Rome, whose pretensions to dominion, indeed, at this early period had never been imagined, breathed, or whispered; they had maintained, and zealously defended the opinion, that Easter was to be

<sup>1</sup> There is much difficulty in ascertaining the dates of these events. I am collecting the best accounts I can from the clashing materials of this portion of the history.

<sup>2</sup> An anonymous writer in the Dub-

lin Review, when defending the utterly untenable doctrine of the infallibility of the Church of Rome, defines infallibility to be the indefectibility of authority.

celebrated on a different day from that which was preferred by the Bishops of Rome and of the West. The truth was, that in the very beginning of the Churches, the time of observing it, though not the observance itself, was considered in its true light, a matter of comparatively little moment. Each Church had accordingly followed the custom and practice of its founder, and had given no disturbance to its neighbours on account of their doing otherwise. Pope Anicetus had suffered the Asiatics at Rome to celebrate Easter in their own manner. Soter was less liberal, and commanded them, when at Rome, to follow the Roman custom; but he had sent the Eucharist, according to the manner of the time, when a bishop would express amity with a brother, to the Asiatics among them, in token of communion and peace. Victor proceeded further. He assumed the right, till then unknown and unheard of among the independent bishops of the universal Church, to impose the Roman custom on all the Churches that followed the practice contrary to his own. Polycrates, the Bishop of Ephesus, strenuously resisted the usurpation. He refused to relinquish the practice of his own Church, which had been introduced by St. John and St. Philip, and handed down to him by seven bishops of his own family. Victor threatened, in reply, to cut him off from his communion, unless he submitted to conform to Rome. Polycrates, anxious to avoid any violation of the union which, up to this time, had subsisted among the bishops of the Church; assembled a council of bishops at Ephesus, and laid the matter before them. They were unanimously of opinion that there was no necessity for changing their uniform practice. Polycrates announced the decision to his brother, the Bishop of Rome, and assured him, though in very mild terms, that his threatenings could not move either himself or his brethren. Victor then published an edict containing the most severe and bitter invectives against all the Churches of Asia, declared them cut off from his communion, sent letters of excommunication to their several bishops, and wrote to other bishops of the Church to exhort them to follow his example, and forbear communion with the bishops of Asia. The replies of the bishops, as Eusebius informs us, and especially the answer of Irenæus, the bishop of Lyons, reproved and censured Victor as the disturber of the peace of the Church.

They refused to obey him, even though the Bishops of Palestine, Pontus, Gaul, and Corinth, coincided in his views. The dispute was an additional cause for summoning the Council of Nice. That council, in compliance with the wish of Constantine, altered the Asiatic mode. Victor, however, kept his word, and separated himself, as the author of the second schism in the Church after Montanus, from the communion of the universal Church, and of the bishops assembled in council.

It was about this time that Montanus, who had been condemned by the same portion of the Church of Christ, and while the controversy respecting Easter was proceeding, was sanctioned and approved by Victor. Montanus courted the communion of Rome after he had been separated from that of the Asiatic bishops. He rescinded his approbation after hearing a more faithful account from Praxæus of Asia. The Churches of the West followed the example of those in the East; and thus the Montanists were condemned by the authority of the whole Church. Their subsequent extravagances and follies, the approbation of Tertullian, the letters of the martyrs of Lyons and others, and their eventual decline after their name was almost lost among the quagmires of ten thousand sects, may be read in the histories of the age. It was only necessary to relate here for the illustration of the general causes and manner of assembling the councils of the Church, the circumstances under which the first great synods were held, which commenced the practice of considering, approving, or condemning opinions; and of excommunicating and anathematizing their proposers and upholders. A novel or strange notion is taught by a Christian teacher. The people are divided. Discussion ensues. Dissension follows. The peace of a Church, or Churches, is broken by the embitterings and hatreds which result from dissension. The heads of the Churches and of the people, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, assemble in synod, at which every one may freely declare his opinion. The arguments on all sides are heard. The votes are taken. The decision is announced to the parties who have debated the question. Distant bishops are apprised of the decrees of the synod. They act in union with the synod; and the solemn agreement of the whole Church in these ages, when

thus ascertained, ought not to be lightly regarded in matters either of discipline or doctrine.

Councils began now to be held still more frequently. We read, at least, of several which were assembled to decide on the various controversies in the Church between this period and that of the Council of Nice. Many were held in Africa, Iconium, and elsewhere, on the subject of the rebaptism of heretics. Others at Bostra, Rome, and Antioch, on the opinions respecting the divinity and nature of Christ. The Novatians, who were more severe on certain points of discipline respecting those who had lapsed in time of persecution, were condemned in a council at Antioch. Two synods were assembled in Asia against Noetus, who expressed himself in objectionable terms respecting the eternity of the Logos—one of the points on which the Church was so rightly jealous. The principal councils now held were those of Antioch, one in 264, and one in 272<sup>3</sup>, against Paul of Samosata, who gave deep offence to the Churches by his vanity of life, love of display, arrogance, extortion, and cruelty. He was accused of assuming great state, sitting upon a lofty throne, insulting those who refused to honour him, commanding hymns to be sung in his praise, and that preachers should commend him in their sermons. These were the acts of a madman. He was further charged with scandalous immorality, and the frequently condemned heresy of Artemon, and others, who taught the non-pre-existence and the mere humanity of Christ. Mr. Newman<sup>4</sup> affirms that it is difficult to determine his precise sentiments concerning the person of Christ, though they were certainly derogatory to his absolute divinity and eternal existence. He had been a sophist. He was not anxious to make proselytes and form a party; but he is affirmed by Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others, to have adopted those opinions which should please Zenobia, who was his patroness and a Jewess. He was the founder of a school, says Mr. Newman, rather than of a sect, by encou-

<sup>3</sup> The number and dates of these councils have been much discussed, some, as Pearson (*Op. posthum.* p. 106), admitting only one; others, as Baronius and Pagi, contending for two, and another class affirming that there were

three, as Fabricius, *Bibl. Græc.* xi. 346.

<sup>4</sup> History of Arianism, p. 5, and the references; and Gibbon's most strange view of the History and Conduct of Paul of Samosata.

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raging in the Church the use of the disputations and sceptical enquiries which were the germs of future errors. The conduct and opinions of Paul of Samosata were condemned in the first council, but sentence of excommunication was not pronounced against him in consequence of his promise to recant his errors. He broke his word and relapsed. He was then deposed in the second council, after Malchion, a priest, had exposed the nature and tendency of his opinions. Domnus was appointed in his place; but the influence of Paul was so great, that his successor found it impossible to remove him till the defeat of Zenobia by Aurelian. The appeal which the Christians made to the civil power to carry into effect the decrees of the council, is the first instance of the interference of the secular authority to accomplish the ordinances of the Church.

In the year 306, Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, called a council, in which Meletius was deposed, being convicted of having sacrificed to idols. Meletius was bishop of Lycopolis, and suffragan to Peter the metropolitan, who was the chief bishop of the province. Another account represents Meletius as withdrawing from the communion of his superior.

If the council of Eliberis, or Elvira, was held in 305, the sixty-fifth canon confirms the opinion that the clergy in Spain were permitted at this time to marry.

Some other councils are mentioned in ecclesiastical history, but it is not necessary to notice any till we consider the circumstances respecting the most important council which has ever yet been summoned; and which, more than any event since the cessation of inspiration, has influenced the opinions, the conduct, and the laws of all nations whom the Church has invited to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ.

The independence of the Churches of each other while they maintained the union both of doctrine and of discipline, is shown by the general absence in the first three centuries, of any acts of authority on the part of any bishop by assuming the office of ecclesiastical superior over another Church. The attempt of Victor to make his opinion of a disputed matter the criterion of right to his brethren, by withdrawing from their communion unless his observances were adopted, was repelled with general indignation. The effort was a proof only of the

incipient greatness of the Church of Rome, and the willingness of its bishop to govern his brethren if they would submit to his dominion. Because some men are more active-minded and ambitious than others, there must ever be attempts to rule by talent, by influence, or by taking advantage of the accidental circumstances which might appear to infer superiority. We accordingly read of many bishops, as well as Victor of Rome, who soon endeavoured to extend their authority. The bishops of Antioch laid claim to authority over that of Cyprus. The council of Ephesus condemned their claim. The Iberian Churches denied their supposed subjection to the patriarch of Constantinople. The Armenian Churches, at a later period, withheld obedience to the same prelate. The bishops of Britain claimed independence of the mission of Augustine. The subsidiary provinces of Italy, the districts within one hundred miles of Rome, according to the decision of the sixth canon of the Council of Nice, and the definition expressed in the code of Justinian, were the district of the provost or Rome<sup>5</sup>. The first dioceses were co-extensive with the civil districts, whether they were parochiæ, or parishes, that is, limited tracts of country around one Church; or dioceses, which were originally the same, and had the same meaning; or provinces, which included many dioceses; or patriarchates, which included many provinces<sup>6</sup>. The only difficulty in ascertaining the limits of the authority of the Bishop of Rome at this period arises from there having been two civil magistrates who presided there<sup>7</sup>. One of these, the provost of Rome, or the præfectus urbis, governed the suburbicarian provinces within a hundred miles of the city. The other magistrate was the vicarius urbis, the vicar of Rome, a

<sup>5</sup> The celebrated rule—let the ancient customs be confirmed, and prevail among the Churches. The Bishop of Alexandria is to rule over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, as the Bishop of Rome presides over the provinces immediately adjacent to his city. Such is the paraphrase by the ancient commentators upon the words—Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, καὶ Λιβύῃ, καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἰερωσύνην· ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ

ἐπίσκοπῳ τοῦτο (or τοιοῦτο) σύνηθές ἐστιν. Bruns, Canon. i. 15.

<sup>6</sup> See the whole account in Bingham, ix. i. 1, seqq. of the division of the whole Roman empire, and of the conformity of the government of the Catholic Church to the civil polity.

<sup>7</sup> The important question of the suburbicarian Churches, important as affecting the claim of the Bishop of Rome to universal ecclesiastical sovereignty, is treated by Bingham, ix. i. § 9, with his usual learning.

civil officer who represented the emperor, and governed seven provinces in Italy, and the three islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. The former of these districts, the provinces around Rome, are generally believed to constitute the diocese of the Bishop of Rome. Others assign to him the more extensive territory. Over these he had the authority of bishop, metropolitan, and patriarch, and his power was extended in subsequent ages to the whole of Italy, to the kingdoms of the west, and partly over the whole Christian world. As one of the most learned Romanists<sup>8</sup>, and one of the best men of the last century, has summed up the question, there is no foundation whatever, at this time, for concluding that the Bishop of Rome possessed any authority over the kingdoms, either of the east or of the west, but that it extended over those Italian provinces alone which were under the superior of the two chief civil magistrates ruling in that district of Italy. All Churches, in truth, were independent of any external ecclesiastical superior; and the matters which related to the Catholic Church at large were settled by the decrees and canons of the councils, which were assembled by mutual consent, as controversies and circumstances required. Church was independent of Church, before the Christianity of the empire was protected and established by the civil power. Its spiritual independence continued after that event. It gave to the emperor that power which the Church of England, and the Episcopal Churches in Scotland, America, and elsewhere, give to the civil magistracy, whether they are established or tolerated; the authority to provide that no laws be made by the Church, which shall be binding upon the people against the laws of the land. It withheld from the civil magistracy the right of determining the persons who should ordain teachers, expound the Scriptures, and administer the sacraments; and whenever the duties of Christians to God

<sup>8</sup> Nos autem ea quæ verisimiliora visa sunt nobis sine ullo partium studio defendimus, ac tria, ni fallor, ostendimus. Primum est, regiones et ecclesias suburbicarias eas minime dici posse, quæ longe ab urbe remotæ erant, nihilque absurdius fingi quam hoc nomine, omnes imperii vel occidentis provincias et ecclesias appellari. Secundum, provincias et ecclesias suburbicarias ultra centesimum ab urbe

milliare protendi. Tertium, verisimilimum esse eas omnes regiones quæ vicario urbis parebant, ipsamque Siciliam, provincias fuisse suburbicarias, et ecclesias suburbicarias eas quæ in istis regionibus positæ erant, quarum exarchus erat seu Patriarcha Romanus Episcopus. — Du Pin, De Antiqua Ecclesiæ Disciplina, Dissert. Prim. ad fin. 92.

were deemed by them to be inconsistent with the laws of the temporal sovereign, they refused obedience without proceeding to rebellion. BOOK II.  
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From considering the government of the early Churches, we next proceed to contemplate their discipline and manners.

It has long been the custom with many well-intentioned, but, we may believe, not well-judging people, to suppose, that because the primitive Churches, in the third century, insisted so much on the union which was founded upon external discipline, the opposite extreme may be preferred of establishing the union among Christians on the foundation of spirituality and love; without regarding at all the outward ties of government and canonical order. "The Apostles," says a living author, "were more intent on enlarging the number of believers, and in forming their piety, than in constructing partial laws for the external constitution of a society which was destined to comprehend every race and variety of man<sup>9</sup>." This affirmation, like many general propositions, is partly true and partly false. The Apostles, as Christ before them, had two objects in view—the promotion of holiness of motive in the heart, and the securing of outward peace among those who sought salvation. We consequently find, that the duties of establishing harmony and union are always combined with those which instruct the soul in the truth of abstract doctrines. There never can be permanent peace, surviving all controversies, lasting through all ages, suited to all societies forming one family of brethren among each other, as well as one family of sons towards God, but that which is founded upon the union of perfect liberty with definite government. Liberty is not caprice. It is the power to do that which is good and wise. It involves the possibility to do wrong, because it implies the power to decide against our best interest; but liberty is best shown when it comes to the right conclusion, that some form of government is useful for the knowledge of the means of peace and union; and experience has uniformly shown, that the harmony which is founded upon no foundation of discipline, dissolves like frost and snow before the jealousies of superiority, and the

<sup>9</sup> Waddington, chap. xiii. p. 200.

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aspirings of ambition. Man is too wicked and too corrupt, even in his most spiritual state, to live at peace with his brethren, without some influence to rule his actions towards his brother, as well as to rule his motives. The Apostles, therefore, preached peace; and to enable men to live in peace, they gave but the one rule we have before considered—that none should teach without authority; and that all who taught, and all who were taught, should be directed by one infallible inspiration, which should be the guide to both; while the disciple deferred to the teacher, without resigning either his reason or his liberty. They gave a rule which appears to be inconsistent with itself, but which the experience of nearly two thousand years has demonstrated to be preferable to authority without freedom, or to freedom without regard to authority. Though it is impossible to justify the language in which it became the custom to speak of the bishops of the Church, before the end of the third century; we must admire the effects of the general discipline produced by this general adherence to episcopal government. The union of liberty, peace, holiness, and order, in this century, was more perfect than it has unfortunately ever since been; and very pleasant, therefore, to the moral eye was the appearance of the universal Church just before the elevation of Constantine. The stone which was to fill the whole earth was beginning to expand on all sides. The grain of mustard-seed had grown into a tree, and the birds rested in its branches. The seed of truth, which the great Sower had sown in the field of the world, had sprung up, and was producing its shocks of corn, fully ripe to be gathered into the garner of God. Many weeds of ambition and selfishness, of obstinate rivalry and worldly interest, might, it is true, be seen in the furrows. Here was the dark blight of heresy, and there the prostration of the weaker plants which had yielded to the storm and tempest of persecutions that had passed over them. The thorn and the thistle of pride and error sometimes overtopped the bending grain; and the tares in every part, according to our Saviour's prediction, grew together with the wheat; but God had visited the earth and blessed it, and watered the furrows, and sent the rain and the dew from heaven into the little valleys thereof; and the ridges were filled with the ripe, rich ears, waiting the day of

harvest. The invisible Church of God, the spiritual Israel, was almost coextensive with the visible Church, the ecclesiastical Israel. One faith in Christ, as the Divine Atoner for the sins of man, bound their hearts and affections in one hope.

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It is necessary to the development of the argument and inferences, which we purpose to draw from this brief survey of Ecclesiastical History, to understand thoroughly the discipline of the early Church in its best and palmy days, between the death of St. John and the accession of Constantine. That period is generally considered to be the time immediately preceding, during, and following the elevation of Cyprian to the government of the see of Carthage.

Cyprian<sup>1</sup>, a heathen of high rank and great wealth, was professor of oratory in the city of Carthage. He became a Christian under the teaching of Cæcilius, of Carthage, in the year 246, and assumed the name of this Presbyter before his own. Cæcilius dying, commended his wife and children to Cyprian's care. Marriage at this time was not considered as a sacrament of which the laity might partake, but from which the clergy were debarred. The persecution of the Christians under Decius, the most severe of any excepting that of Diocletian, broke out soon after the elevation of Cyprian to his see (249). This persecution was chiefly directed against the bishops and heads of the Churches. In compliance with the request of his friends, and in obedience also to the command of our Lord, "when they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another," Cyprian retired from Carthage. There was at this time so great union among Christians, that every Church interested itself in the affairs of other Churches. Every Christian regarded himself as bound to take care of his brother. To think, to wish, to reject the same things, was always regarded as one bond of friendship. In addition to these, the Christians were called upon to suffer the same things. They had one volume of the Holy Scriptures, one creed, one form of government. They had one severe and

<sup>1</sup> My authorities for this account are Pearson's *Annales Cypriani*, prefixed to the Amsterdam reprint of the Oxford edition of Cyprian's works; Giesler, Burton, Heylyn's *History of Episcopacy*, and Sage's *Cyprianic Age*.

This tract is very rare, though the larger 4to volume of vindication is frequently to be met with. The greater part of the impression of the former was burnt at the printer's, and I believe has never been reprinted.

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intolerable persecution, which pressed upon them; and they had one common aversion to the various sects, and proposers of heretical opinions submitted to them from time to time. The singular identity of opinion, interest, and worship, which pervaded the great mass of Christians in all these respects, occasioned the conviction, that there was one large body of Christians who might be regarded as one family extended through the whole world. The epithet which they gave to themselves was derived from the expression which implied this feeling. They called themselves Catholic<sup>2</sup>. The word first occurs in the account given by Eusebius of the martyrdom of Polycarp<sup>3</sup>. It was afterwards decreed by Justinian to be descriptive of those who adhered to the creed of the Council of Nice. As they considered themselves to be Catholic in contradistinction to the Arians, they acted as Catholics interested in the spiritual welfare of each other. The three principal Churches of the world, at this time, were those of Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria. The bishops of these Churches, as well as their clergy and people, maintained a constant intercourse and communion. In the persecution under Decius, Fabian, the Bishop of Rome, was put to death. Cyprian wrote to the presbyters and people of the Church of Rome to congratulate them on the noble martyrdom of their pastor<sup>4</sup>. When Cyprian was concealed in his retreat, the presbyters of Rome, as they were afraid for sixteen months to elect a bishop, expressed to the African Church their conviction of the propriety of Cyprian's retirement. The Roman Church, as we have seen, consisted of the suburbicarian provinces, being a large portion of Italy, and of the Mediterranean islands. The Church of Carthage consisted of Numidia and both the Mauritanias<sup>5</sup>. The Church of Alexandria comprised the rest of Africa. There was, consequently, great union in the principal portions of the empire. During this retreat of Cyprian, many, both of the bishops and clergy, apostatized from their faith. Others endured the tortures inflicted by the abominable instruments of cruelty invented by their heathen persecutors with more

<sup>2</sup> See Bingham, i. i. § 9.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. H. E. iv. xv.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. xxxi.

<sup>5</sup> Latius fusa est nostra provincia, (says Cyprian, Ep. xlv.) habet enim Numidiam et Mauritanias duas.

firmness. The poor victims who had shrunk from the fire, and the steel, or the more hardened deserters from their Christian profession, were excluded from the communion of their brethren. Those who remained steadfast, interceded with the Churches to remit the punishment of those who had lapsed. Their request was complied with, and both the *thurificati*, who had offered incense, and the *sacrificati*, who had eaten of the idolatrous sacrifices, and the *libellatici*, who had received from the magistrates certificates of their conformity to heathenism during the persecution, were readmitted to communion. Many of these, however, had not waited to be even threatened with persecution. They had gone in crowds to the forum, begging to be permitted to prove themselves to be pagans. These also were readmitted to communion without having given satisfactory proof of the sincerity of their repentance. Cyprian, who had already exerted his authority, on his attaining the see, against the immoral and profligate; now expressed his displeasure at this relaxation of discipline among his presbyters. He declared that those who had been apostates from the faith could not be admitted again into the Church without the consent of the bishop. He insisted upon the cessation of the practice. He wrote in the most affectionate manner to the persons whom he thus required to prove their repentance before they were readmitted into the Church; and tells them that the presbyters and deacons are bound to admonish the people to repent. The law of the Church, also, was, that when a Christian was put out of communion, no brother Christian might restore him but the bishop who had condemned him. Cyprian censures severely the conduct of Gaius Diddensis, who broke this rule. He tells him that the subject shall be considered in full council on his return to Carthage. He writes to the Roman clergy, who condole with him, and approve to the utmost the discipline he was endeavouring to restore among the Churches of Africa. So it was, that though the Churches were thus extensive, the number of believers, however great, was united by one bond of discipline; and when Privatus, a concealed heretic, left Africa, and went to Rome, to be received there as a Christian, Cyprian wrote to the Roman presbyters to apprise them of the character of the man, and they declare, in their answer, that it was the common duty of Christians to watch over the

interests of the whole Church wherever it was diffused through the provinces.

The efforts of Cyprian to preserve the discipline of the Church, and to take care that none were admitted into communion but the repentant, gave deep offence to two opposite parties. Whenever, indeed, discipline, resulting from authority anxious to unite justice with mercy, is thoughtfully and soberly exercised, it is generally attended with this effect. Cyprian offended one party who thought that his discipline was too relaxed, and that the apostate ought never, on any pretence whatever, to be restored to communion. He offended another party, who considered him to be too severe in demanding proofs of repentance to the extent, and in the manner he had deemed to be right. The two persons who defended these opposite views, had originally agreed in the one opinion, that the apostates ought never to be readmitted. After a certain time, one of them entirely changed that opinion. Both were presbyters. Novatian, a presbyter of Rome, began a schism in favour of severity. Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, after having opposed Cyprian as too lenient, subsequently opposed him with equal tenacity, as being too severe. Cyprian maintained against both, the discipline which demanded proofs of repentance, and condemned both presbyters.

About this time, therefore, that event occurred which gave occasion to Cyprian to write the treatise which, more than any other of the same extent, has occasioned discussion among those who have advocated, in the latter days of the Church, the discipline and union of Christians in catholic primitive antiquity.

Novatian was only, at this time, a stricter disciplinarian than Cyprian. He was offended with the authorized ruler of the Church, but he had not separated from his communion. He believed all the articles of the Christian faith, but he thought that faith was betrayed by the too great indulgence of those who refused to exclude the apostates in persecution, from the covenant of grace. He now appears in a new and most unhappy character. He was the author of the first schism, though not of the first heresy, in the Christian Church. The presbyters of Rome, with the deacons and people, taking advantage of the revolt of Valens against

Decius, (one of those political diversions of the attention of persecutors from the Church, which has so often saved it from destruction,) resolved to elect another bishop in the place of Fabian. Their choice fell upon Cornelius, their twentieth bishop, a blameless, exemplary man. Sixteen bishops, from various parts of the empire, had taken refuge in Rome at this time. The Church of Rome, indeed, in these earlier and purer periods of her history, was the common refuge of the orthodox; and the steadfast defender of truth against all heterodoxy: the maintainer of discipline without innovation, the possessor, in short, of those virtues which laid one foundation of that supremacy which was so much and so fatally perverted. These bishops consecrated Cornelius in the usual manner. His election, consecration, and all the ceremonies then in use were observed; and there could be no doubt, therefore, that Cornelius was the canonically appointed Bishop of Rome. Novatian, however, who had made a considerable party in the Church, (as all may do who presume to innovate upon the plea of greater austerity,) affirmed that Cornelius was one of the libellatici, because he had requested protection, in the time of the persecution, from the heathen magistrate. This might have been done without compromising his Christianity. Many magistrates might have been willing to connive at the safety of Christians without calling upon them to do any act of apostasy; as the father of Constantine, in the time of Diocletian, exerted himself to the utmost to protect the Christians. Novatian then proceeded to induce his party to elect him bishop in opposition to Cornelius. He was consecrated either in Rome, as Eusebius affirms<sup>6</sup>, or in a neighbouring village, as Theodoret declares<sup>7</sup>, by three bishops sent by Novatus. Cornelius was further accused of communicating with the apostates. He had done so with Trophimus, whom Cyprian had readmitted into the Church upon sufficient proofs of his repentance. Both Cornelius and Novatian, according to the praiseworthy custom which then prevailed to preserve union in the Church, sent letters to Cyprian, and no doubt also to the other bishops, acquainting him with the double election. Cyprian received the letters, and summoned a council of bishops in

<sup>6</sup> H. E. vi. 43.

<sup>7</sup> See Fabric. Bibl. Græc. v. 274.

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Carthage. The council send a deputation to Rome. The bishops at Rome give proofs that Cornelius was rightly ordained, and demonstrated his worthiness and fitness for his high office. Their testimony is amply confirmed by others; and the result was, that Cornelius was universally acknowledged throughout all Africa. Additional councils are summoned, both in Africa and Rome, and laws were passed respecting the apostates in persecution, according to the view which had been previously taken by Cyprian in Carthage. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, agreed in these decisions, and wrote letters, according to the custom, to many Churches, to those in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Armenia, to acquaint them of the schism of Novatian, and the conclusions of the principal Churches.

About this time Cornelius died; and the treatise on the unity of the Church was written before that event. The Novatians called themselves the pure, or the puritans of the day. Novatian aimed at a Church that was free from fault, an object utterly unattainable on earth; for the Church is compared by Christ Himself to a field in which the tares and wheat must grow together till the harvest; and all that we can hope to do is, to increase the quantity of the wheat, and encourage its growth above that of the tares. Cyprian wished a Church free from schism; because, when Christians agree among each other, they will ever be more able to oppose the common enemy. The divisions of the Christians are the real causes of that scorn of the infidel which hardens the heart by preventing even the curiosity of demanding evidence. Milner, in this part of his History of the Church, confesses the error of Novatian, and the superiority of episcopal government; but he trusts that Novatian, and Cyprian, and Cornelius, will all meet in heaven, clothed with the garments of Jesus. Amen, Amen, will be the prayer of all; but we must be careful how we apply this reasoning. We know not who will be saved, or who will be lost; but it is our duty to study and follow truth and not liberality. If one object of the Gospel is to produce peace on earth by unity of government, as well as to teach the goodwill of God to man, by raising him to immortal happiness; we are not justified in sacrificing one useful object in the vague hope of not losing the other. The proper conclusion seems to be that to which

the early Church now arrived, and which cannot be too frequently insisted upon. The Church is to maintain its discipline. If an individual who desires to do good, or to recommend a certain opinion to the Church, believes it to be his bounden duty to oppose the Church, let the Church do its duty by condemning that individual, by refuting his error, and by separating him from its communion, without punishing the body for the sin of the soul; but no Christian will ever defend schism as an indifferent matter because the Church cannot punish it more severely. He will never palliate an unscriptural offence because it may please God to pardon invincible ignorance or obstinate perverseness. Each must be left in the field of the Church, whether tares or wheat, till the harvest; and it is possible that Cyprian, Novatian, and Cornelius, may meet in heaven; but it is difficult to perceive how this palliates the needless, and therefore unjustifiable schism of Novatian. The persecutor and the victim may be alike saved in heaven; but the martyr in the flames must have other consolation, than believing that the mercy of God will forgive the tormentor, and that their spirits shall meet in heaven.

The treatise of Cyprian on the unity of the Church is confidently claimed by all parties to be favourable to their notions of Church agreement. It is more especially claimed by the Episcopalian and the Romanist. That it establishes, beyond all doubt, the authority of the bishops to rule the Church of God, is certain; but the sectarian affirms, that the pastor of a single congregation, or superintendent over one parish, is a bishop; whilst the Romanist affirms, that the authority of all bishops is derived from the principal bishop, the Bishop of Rome. I purpose to consider the question of the supremacy of Rome in a subsequent chapter. We will, therefore, confine our view at present to the meaning of the words bishop and bishopric, as they may be ascertained from the facts of history, without reference to the other arguments; and then examine the object of the treatise of Cyprian. The inquiry will be useful with reference to our ultimate conclusions.

Let us imagine an individual missionary sent out as an entire stranger into a heathen country. He converts, by God's blessing, twenty thousand persons, and then a hundred

thousand. These people cannot meet all in one place for worship; and he must, therefore, appoint other teachers than himself. These people are extended over a space of ten, or twenty, or fifty miles; but they all belong to one district. Let us imagine a thousand individuals doing the same thing. Some of them have but little success. One converts a thousand people, and requires but one or two assistants; and that district over which this thousand are extended is very large. Another converts ten thousand, and their district is comparatively very small. But these primary missionaries all have equal power. Their assistants are called by the same name as themselves, but have not the same authority till the chief missionary dies; and the districts through which their several converts are scattered are named after the political divisions of the country; and all these missionaries, their assistants, and their converts, form one society; and all their districts together form but one union. Just such as this was the primitive Catholic Church. The first followers of the Apostles were missionaries invested with authority to go out to convert the world. They were bishops; their assistants were the presbyters and deacons; their converts and themselves were the Churches; the districts over which the converts extended gave the names to the Churches. These districts were various in extent. Some were as large as a province, and we read of the bishop of a province. Some were only as large as a town, a country, a crowded village, an extensive estate. Hence it is that the bishops, or persons invested with power to ordain presbyters to assist them; had dioceses, or parishes, of various extent, great or small, according to the arbitrary division of a political nature previously existing. The ministrations of the primitive teachers of Christianity were at first indefinite—they were to go into all the world. When the world began to listen, each took his place. When the world began to embrace their religion, the ministers of religion subdivided their work into the superintendence of small districts, now called parishes; which were originally coextensive with estates; and to single congregations, which are now called Churches. All the districts taken together constitute, in the primitive times, and in modern times, one holy Catholic Apostolic Church. This is the account of the establishment of Christianity at first;

and the government of the Catholic Church, was episcopal rather than independent, or presbyterian. The independent may derive an argument for his mode of discipline from the incipient establishment in each district. The presbyterian may derive an argument, for his form of Church government, from the consulting of the primary missionary with the teachers he appointed, and from the identity of names. The episcopalian sees the primary teacher ruling the district in which he was planted, and succeeded in that rule by the first of the teachers he had appointed. Each district is independent, and all united, forming the Catholic Church. The Romanist exalts one only of the primary missionaries to authority over the rest; and destroys the equality of all, to preserve the theory of a more effectual government, and a centre of unity. The facts of Scripture, the establishment of the primary churches, the uniformity of their government and discipline, seem to me to demonstrate the origin, object, usefulness, and antiquity of the primitive episcopacy.

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The treatise of Cyprian on the unity of the Church was written on the election of Cornelius, and the rejection of the claims of Novatian. When certain paragraphs of a book are interpreted in various ways, it is necessary to know the object for which the book was written to enable us to decide more correctly between interpreters.

Before Cornelius was elected to the bishopric of Rome, the utmost union in all points of discipline prevailed. We have seen this union in the agreement and decision of the principal Churches. Cyprian exerted his authority with equal effect against the licentious, the austere, and the indulgent. The argument of Cyprian, therefore, is, that all bishops who had been rightly consecrated to their high office were to be regarded and obeyed in the Churches; and that to despise the episcopate, or the government of the Churches of the bishops, is the great source of heresies and divisions.

He begins the treatise by reminding the Church that obedience to the command of Christ, must be the proof of the prudence and simplicity of mind which ought ever to characterize the Christian; and that those only are safe who build upon this foundation. He warns them to avoid heresies, for they all have their origin in ignorance of the Scriptures, and in contempt of the union and authority of the Church.

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He then applies to the argument the words which the Lord said unto Peter, "I will give to thee, because thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not conquer it; even I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Though Christ gives to all the Apostles equal power and authority, He still speaks of the unity of that power<sup>8</sup>. All the Apostles were to be regarded as the founders of the Church; but the unity of the Church was in the general episcopate; and he who did not maintain the unity of the Church could not believe within himself that he held the faith of the Church<sup>9</sup>. He who opposes the Church, how can he belong to the Church? St. Paul teaches the impossibility of this when he speaks of the sacrament of unity, and says, "There is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" which unity we, who are bishops, we who preside over the Churches, ought more especially to maintain and preserve, that we may prove the episcopate to be one and indivisible. He then goes on to make the remark which has been so constantly applied by the Church of Rome exclusively to itself, but which Cyprian applied to the Catholic Church at large as the aggregate of episcopal communions—that out of the Church there can be no salvation. He who separates himself, he says, from the Church, separates from the promises of the Church; he cannot have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother<sup>1</sup>.

Such are the expressions of Cyprian in the early part of the treatise on the unity of the Church, which is now open before me—he cannot have God for his father, who has not the Church as his mother. Cyprian is certainly not talking

<sup>8</sup> The expression, "Tu es Petrus," was applied by Cyprian to the defence of the episcopate in general. Stephen, a few years after, applied the words to the defence of the supremacy of Rome as the see of St. Peter.

<sup>9</sup> Hanc Ecclesiæ unitatem qui non tenent, tenere se fidem credit? qui Ecclesiæ renititur et resistit, in Ecclesiâ se esse confidit? Quando et beatus Apostolus Paulus hoc idem docent, et sacramentum unitatis ostendat, dicens; unum corpus, &c. (Eph. iv. 4—6.) Quam unitatem firmiter tenere, et vindicare debemus, maxime Episcopi, qui

in Ecclesiâ præsidemus, ut Episcopatum quoque ipsum, unum atque indivisum probemus. Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Ecclesia quoque una est, quæ in multitudinem latius incremento fecunditatis extenditur.—Cypr. Opera, p. 108, edit. fol. Amst. p. 120, edit. Gersdorf, 1839.

<sup>1</sup> Nec perveniet ad Christi præmia, qui relinquit Ecclesiam Christi. Alienus est, profanus est, hostis est. Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem.—Id. § vi. p. 121.

of the Church of Rome. We will consider that question hereafter. He is speaking of the Apostolic Churches, which form the one Catholic Church. I can discover no flaw in his argument. I cannot but believe that the promises are given to the Church, to the visible Church, to the Apostolic Church, to the Catholic Church; even to the Churches which possess the sacraments in regular succession and descent from the very days of the Apostles. Yet there must be some error in the conclusions which tell me that God, even God who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, cannot, ay, cannot be the Father of many Christians also, who are not members of the Episcopal Churches. Unworthy as I am to hope for the inheritance of the saints in light, I cannot divest myself of that hope, knowing in whom I believe; but when I think of that belief, I cannot but hope, that if I partake of that inheritance, I shall meet as my companion and friend for ever; the soul of my beloved parent, whose body I lately committed to the ground. The sun in the heaven never shone upon a more holy man in these our later ages. He communed with his God. His spirit lived in heaven. He was not a member of an episcopal communion. He had God for his Father, though the true, visible, Apostolic Church, in this sense, was not his mother. What then am I to say? That the soul of man may be saved by his faith in the Son of God, though he may not have arrived at the conclusion, that the promises of God are confined to the Episcopal Churches. Two objects are proposed in the Gospel, the salvation of the soul in its immortality; and peace and union upon earth. The salvation of the soul must proceed from the faith which is built upon evidence, which the authority of the Church and of the Scriptures proposes to the mind. Peace and union can be found most certainly by observing the institutions of the Gospel. But God is not limited to his own institutions, his own laws, his own promises. These are nothing but the most effectual, the most certain, the appointed and undoubted means of blessing; and He does not generally impart his grace where the authorized channels of his mercy have not been resorted to for its impartation. He who has not God for his father, will have the curse of banishment from his presence, rest upon his doomed soul for ever, and for ever;

but I cannot believe that he who feared God, loved Christ, and prayed for the daily renewal of his soul, can have that fearful curse rest upon him, so that he shall be the companion of evil spirits who hate God, and cry out to the Son of God, "What have we to do with Thee?" because the evidences of the episcopacy did not satisfy his mind as they satisfy mine. I, as I read the word of God, and the institutions of Christ, must worship with those Christians among whom there is an apostolical succession of authorized administrators of the sacraments, and interpreters of the word of God. There, in such Churches, my soul finds rest and peace. I know the promise to be certainly there, though it may be uncertainly elsewhere; but I will not presume to draw the inference, however unavoidable it may appear, that because I am undoubtedly right, another must, therefore, be wrong; that because the son is saved, the father is damned; that God was not the Father of his spirit, because the Episcopal Church was not his mother. I believe that out of the Church there is no salvation; but that Church, is the spiritual society of all who believe in the atonement by the Son of God. I believe that Episcopacy, being Divinely appointed, is the right, best, undeniable channel of grace; and the only source of peace and union: and that outward communion with the visible Church gives harmony and peace to Churches and the world, lessens hatred, prevents schism, increases present happiness, is ordained for the sake of the good of man, and is never to be therefore undervalued and rejected: but he is too presumptuous who shall look upon the controversies of Christians, and dare to say, "God cannot save the soul, and God will not save the soul of that believer in his Son, who has not become a member of an Episcopal Church." I know, I am sure, from the whole testimony of the Word of God, and of the traditionary government of the Catholic Church, that the religious episcopalian will be saved; but I remember the holy men with whom my spirit has held the communion of saints, and whom I hope to meet before the throne of my manifested God hereafter; and I dare not say that the religious dissenter will be damned. I cannot, therefore, agree with the sentiment of Cyprian in this passage, that "he cannot have God for his Father, who," in his sense of the expression, "has not the Church for his mother."

St. Cyprian goes on to illustrate his declaration, by the usual analogies of the seamless coat of Christ, and that the Church is the dove and the sheepfold; all of which is quite true, though the converse be not so fully granted as he would desire. "No good man," he observes, "will leave the Church." This also is true; but every good man will seek for evidence that the claims of the Church to his attachment are well founded. The allowing this freedom to every one is a worthy attribute of the Church. He describes with great power of language the poison of heresy, and severely condemns the schismatical ordainers of Novatian<sup>2</sup>. He argues very truly, that the promises of the Gospel are granted to the few, not to the many; and affirms, in very strong language, that even martyrdom will not expiate schism, for he is not a martyr who is not in the Church. He ought to have said, he is not a martyr whose creed we ought to follow, even though we admire his patience. He declares that no true Christian will depart from brotherly love, for such a man lacerates the Church, destroys the faith, disturbs the peace, dissipates the charity, and profanes the sacraments of the Church. Schism, he reminds them, is a sin condemned by the Apostles. God, he tells them, will punish the intruders into the priesthood, as he did Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and Uzziah; and he pronounces the schismatical to be worse than the lapsed, because the apostate damns only his own soul, the schismatic destroys the souls of many<sup>3</sup>. Many zealous servants of God

<sup>2</sup> "Hi sunt," says St. Cyprian, (i. e. heretics,) "qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas, sine divinâ dispositione, præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ullâ ordinationis lege consistunt, qui nemine Episcopatum dante, Episcopi sibi nomen assumunt." § 10, p. 124.

This is the interpretation which is given of the expression, apud temerarios convenas Episcopi sibi nomen assumunt. Qualis, nimirum, erat Novatianus. Per temerarios convenas—intellegendi veniunt tres ex Italiâ evocati Episcopi, qui ordinationi Novatiani manus suas commodabant.—See the notes to the treatise De Unitate Eccl. p. 111, ed. Fell.

Esse Martyr non potest qui in Ecclesiâ non est. This, too, is a monstrous proposition, and it was constantly uttered to our own martyrs in the reign

of Mary by the Romanists, who mistook the Church of Rome for the Church Catholic. Martyrs are only witnesses to the truth who have confirmed their testimony with their blood; and many of all sects and classes have died as martyrs to the truth of an abstract proposition in and out of the Churches of Rome and England. It is the conviction of an eternal reward promised to the firm adherents of a real or supposed truth, which constitutes a martyr. We admire firmness and courage even in an enemy, though we do not follow his example.

<sup>3</sup> Hic qui lapsus est, sibi tantum nocuit; ille, qui hæresin vel schisma facere conatus est, multos secum trahendo decepit. Hic animæ unius est damnum, illic periculum plurimorum. Id. § 18 (al. 20), p. 130.

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have been so destroyed, and their society is to be avoided by the faithful. He then concludes his treatise by lamenting, as good men in all ages have done, the corruptions of the Church in the day in which he lived, predicting the judgments of God upon the impenitent, and exhorting, in devotional and energetic language, all Christians to whom his pages may come, to prepare for the coming of their Lord.

I dwell thus fully on the treatise of Cyprian on the Unity of the Church, because, though it is a very short tract, it has had a greater influence on the reasonings of Christians respecting the Church than any other tract of the same description since the time when it was written. The tract is very valuable, as it exhibits the opinion and the discipline of the Church in its purer age, when the effects of worldly ambition were but beginning to appear. It insists upon adherence to the external discipline of the Church in terms which were only justifiable at the period when the Church was free from corruption in doctrine, as it was at this period. Novatian was utterly unjustifiable in seceding from the Church, when such men as St. Cyprian executed firmly, yet mercifully, the very institutions which Novatian acknowledged to be of Apostolical foundation. The treatise, however, has been more injurious to the Church than any other, because it places the adherence to the outward communion above the union which is founded on faith in Christ. The proper mode of stating the argument for Episcopacy is, "because we believe in Christ we will agree to worship together; and as the forms of worship are different, we will adopt that which is demonstrably most Scriptural, ancient, and useful; that is, Episcopacy." He appeals more to authority than to evidence. When the Church began to be more corrupt, and when the successors of the Apostles themselves taught many errors; the argument by which they appealed to the consciences of men, and threw their fetters over the incipient movements of thoughtful or doubting minds, was taken from the notion of the unity of the visible Church as it was laid down by Cyprian. His description of the evils of heresy is embodied in the canon law, and was made the principal foundation, in conjunction with the texts in Scripture which condemn heretics, of the severer enactments of the ferocious code of the inquisi-

sition itself'. While the greatest violation of unity consisted in the arming heresy with power, and placing it in the highest place in the Church; and while that heresy could only defend its usurpation by the red right hand of persecution, the lightning by which it pierced the souls of its victims was the charge of offending God, by violating the unity of the visible Church. The figure of the seamless coat of Christ, the analogy urged in a subsequent age against every reformer of the papacy, was taken from this treatise of Cyprian; and the argument which was justly used against Novatus, Firmilianus, or Novatian, was unjustly, and by God's mercy, unprofitably or unsuccessfully used against Wycliffe, and Luther, and Cranmer, and the noble army of martyrs. The treatise is valuable as displaying the desire of the early Christians to maintain union upon the foundation of the episcopal succession; and happy would it have been for the Church if its bishops had not rendered the argument of Cyprian unsatisfactory. Happy will it be for the Catholic Church, when the several Churches of which it is composed shall become once more, so pure and spiritual, that the argument of Cyprian shall again appeal to the conscience; and the apostolical succession become the best bond of union to divided and alienated brethren.

Because the treatise on unity, which affirms Episcopacy to be the secret of union, has been so generally received, the members of the Church of Rome have interpolated certain expressions to make the world believe that Cyprian intended to represent the primacy of Peter, and not the general episcopate of the Apostles, as the criterion of the unity of the Church. These interpolations have been exposed by James about two centuries ago at Oxford; and by Rigaltius in his remarks contained in his edition of S. Cyprian<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> I regret to be obliged to state that the references to the passages, upon the authority of which this assertion was made, has been lost.

<sup>5</sup> See the notes in the Amsterdam reprint of Fell's edition of Cyprian, p. 106. The words in the following passage, which are printed in italics, are interpolated—*Christus . . . ut unitatem manifestaret [unam cathedram constituet et] unitatis ejusdem originem, ab uno*

*incipientem suâ auctoritate disposuit. Hoc erant utique et ceteri Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis : sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur [et primatus Petro datur, ut una Christi ecclesia et cathedra una monstretur. Et pastores sunt omnes, et grex unus ostenditur, qui ab Apostolis omnibus unanimi consensu pascatur] ut ecclesia Christi una monstretur. Qui ecclesie renititur, et*

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Soon after the publication of the treatise on the unity of the Church, two councils were called at Carthage, which confirmed the decisions of Cyprian against Novatian respecting the lapsed. To these councils the great body of the faithful was summoned. They were called twice a year. The bishops acted with them, and no ruler of the Church in those days acted as an independent magistrate, giving laws emanating from his sole arbitrary authority. The Churches of Alexandria and Rome; of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and of Cæsarea in Palestine; of Jerusalem, Tyre, Laodicea, Syria, Tarsus, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Pontus, and Bithynia, did the same. One Church assisted and communed with another. All were united in one bond of independence of the authority of each other, by one tie of episcopal discipline, by one general doctrine—the divinity of Christ, and by one code of Scripture, which by this time had been completed and received.

Cyprian was put to death 14th September in the year 258. Stephen was made Bishop of Rome 13th May, 253. During these five years much correspondence was carried on between Stephen, Cyprian, and other bishops. Before Gregory VII. commanded that the title “Pope,” or papa, father, should be confined exclusively to the see of Rome, all bishops were accustomed to this title. We have a letter from the presbyters and deacons of Rome to Pope Cyprian, in the year 250<sup>6</sup>. The general term, however, by which they addressed each other was that which implied the common equality, namely, brother. Stephen, however, did not act so entirely as a brother as his two immediate predecessors, Lucius and Cornelius, had done. Two circumstances occurred before the death of Cyprian which place in a still stronger light the general communion among Christians, their independence of each other, and their adherence to episcopal discipline.

The bishops of Spain deposed from their places in the episcopate two of their brethren as Libellatici—Basilides, Bishop of Leon; and Martial, Bishop of Merida. By the laws of the Churches at that day, those who were suspended

resistit [qui cathedram Petri super quem fundata est ecclesia, deserit] in ecclesiâ se esse confidit?

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 30, edit. Fell. On the title of Papa, as applied to every bishop, see Bingham, bk. ii. ch. ii. § 7.

from communion in one, were not admitted to communion in another Church. Basilides and Martial, however, went to Rome, and there representing themselves as unjustly condemned, were admitted to communion by Stephen. Upon this they returned to Spain, and reassumed their functions. The Spanish bishops, indignant at this interference, appealed to Pope Cyprian. A council was called. It decided that Basilides, Martial, and Stephen, were wrong; that the synod which had deposed them was right, and that whoever communicated with these was to be refused communion with the bishops of Africa. This act of the Spanish bishops is made the foundation of the doctrine of appeals to Rome. We shall consider this subject below. The decision, however, of the Bishop of Rome was reversed by the bishops of Carthage; and the Churches submitted to the decrees of Cyprian.

In the year 256 a dispute arose, whether baptism by the hand of heretics was void, or valid. In the former discussion about the Spanish bishops, Stephen was wrong and Cyprian was right. In the present instance this was reversed; Cyprian was certainly wrong, and Stephen was right. The Church at large had at different times decided this question in the most opposite manner, as if it would please God to permit the world to see that nothing is infallible but Himself and his Word. Cyprian, and the council at Carthage of seventy-one bishops, decided that baptism by heretics was not to be considered valid. They wrote a synodical letter on the subject to Stephen, and declared in that letter that they would not withhold communion from those who might not come to the same conclusions<sup>7</sup>. The Bishop of Rome, in reply to the letters of Cyprian, first assumed that imperious style which became so common in the following ages with his successors. He talks of the dignity of his see, and his succession from St. Peter. He rejects their decrees, and assails their reasoning. He calls upon Cyprian to retract his decision; and threatens to withdraw communion from all who oppose his present decision<sup>8</sup>. His brother, Pope Cyprian,

<sup>7</sup> Few records are so amusing as the account of the Council of Carthage, with the opinions of eighty-seven bishops given *seriatim*.—Cyprian. *Oper.* p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> Cyprian describes the spirit in

which this letter of Stephen is written —*inter cetera, vel superba, vel ad rem non pertinentia, vel sibi ipsi contraria, quæ imperite atque improvide scripsit, etiam illud adjunxit. . . Cyprian. Epist.* lxxiv. p. 210.

replied by summoning another council. He was not compelled to yield to the opinion of Stephen. He had evidently acted upon the high notions he had formed of the exclusive privileges of the visible Church; and though by his limiting the grace of God he offended many of his brethren, yet the question ought to have been discussed and considered, and not settled by the authority of an usurping arrogance, even when the arrogant was right. The council agreed with Cyprian. It was unanimous in its conclusions. The result was communicated to Stephen. The Bishop of Rome, however, refused to see the deputation from Carthage, and commanded the members of his Church to decline all conversation or communion with them. He cut off from communion with Rome, (and thus, though right in the abstract, made himself guilty of schism,) the bishops of Carthage, Numidia, Mauritania, Cilicia, Egypt, and Cappadocia. The bishops despised the needless and unjust anger of their brother, and preserved their love while they lost their orthodoxy. Dionysius<sup>9</sup>, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote to Stephen, and entreated him to alter his measures, and to avoid schism. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, expressed himself with the utmost indignation against Stephen. He designates him by his proper title, as the real schismatic who departed from the unity of the Church: for, by separating others from him, he had separated Rome from all other Churches. "How much sin," he exclaims, "hast thou committed, by cutting thyself off from so many flocks!" He calls him, also, a bold, insolent, and impious schismatic<sup>1</sup>. Such was the state of the dispute when Stephen died, without altering his decision, in the year 257. Cyprian was put to death in the following year.

Such then is the view which ecclesiastical history affords us of the discipline of the Churches at this time. We cannot justify the dissensions which were beginning to spring up. The history of the best men and the purest periods only proves the imperfection of human polity; and that man, at

<sup>9</sup> Euseb. H. E. vii. 27; Theodoret, Hæret. Fab. ii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> See it printed among the epistles of St. Cyprian, number seventy-five, in Fell's edition, and in Routh's *Opuscula*, i. 221. An attempt was made by

Missorius, a Franciscan, in 1733, to overthrow the authenticity of the Epistles of Firmilian and Cyprian; but his arguments have been satisfactorily refuted by G. G. Preu, in an academic dissertation, published at Jena in 1738.

his best estate, even of a pure creed and great watchfulness as to discipline, is but vanity. There was, however, much to admire; and many things which we might well desire to be revived in the Christian Church. It is delightful to review the manner in which, till the conduct of the Bishop of Rome began to produce alienation of Church from Church, the universal, holy, apostolic Church of Christ was composed of many episcopal communions, which unitedly formed the one Church. "There is but one Church," says Cyprian, "throughout the whole world, divided into many members. There is but one episcopacy, portioned out among many bishops, who are united among themselves<sup>2</sup>." All were

<sup>2</sup> See Bingham, book xvi. chap. ii. § 8, 9, where many instances are mentioned. Hey's Lectures, vol. iv. p. 413.

An eminent theologian of the present day does not coincide with those who take this view of the superior purity of the early Church. "Let us not," says Dr. Pye Smith (in a letter on the necessity of religion), "repeat with servile credulity, the twenty times told cry, that the Christian religion flourished in extraordinary purity and power, and shone brightly in the beauty of holiness, till it was adopted and incorporated into the imperial institutions by Constantine. From the days of the Apostles themselves, it began to be invaded and perverted; and after the death of the Apostle John, the departures from Scriptural purity were rapid and fearful. Besides dangerous errors in the primary doctrines of the Gospel, we find many corruptions in discipline and order long before the close of the third century. Observances and ceremonies, snatched up from the abrogated Judaism, and even imitations of heathen rites, were obtruded upon Christians. Ambition, usurpation, and the love of worldly pomp, showed themselves in many ways. Efforts to obtain dominion were zealously made; and the spirit of persecution was displayed among the primitive pastors and their Churches."

This is all very true, but the excellent doctor has mistaken the question. We do not deny that there was much evil, but we affirm, that there was a greater degree of good. The tares were in the field, it is true, but there

was more wheat than tares. The errors of Valentinus, Saturninus, Basilides, and all others enumerated by Lardner and Mosheim, flourished and abounded; but truth flourished still more. If the mere fact of the prevalence of evil should prevent us from eulogizing the good, we might say that the Apostolic age itself ought not to receive our admiration. St. Paul complains of the heresies and apostasies of his day. He declares that the mystery of iniquity did already work; that Hymeneus and Philetus, Alexander the coppersmith, Demas, and the Corinthian converts, were all deserving of censure for various offences; and wherever a society of the best, wisest, and most religious persons meet together, they all have human hearts of flesh and blood beating within them—they are all fallen beings; and whatever were the good grace of their God upon them, much of pride—that inseparable evil of the heart of man—much of dogmatism, and error, and obstinacy, and desire of pre-eminence will be found; yet, who will deny that the Apostolic age was better than those which succeeded it; or, that a society of religious men is more to be admired, respected, and praised than others, though much of weakness, corruption, and folly may be discoverable among them? With respect also to the introduction of some of the Jewish customs, and some of the Pagan customs, into the service or discipline of the Church; if the customs were not abused to superstition or absurdity, no evil was committed. Both Jews and

held together by one communion; so that, when a Christian travelled from one country to another, he was furnished with letters from the Church of the place he left, to that of the province or city where he was going; and if his own Church had cut him off from its communion, he was excluded from that of every Church where he sojourned. Public notice was given by one Church to another when an offender was excommunicated; because he who was excommunicated by one portion of the general episcopacy, was regarded as an outcast from it all; and any Church which broke this rule was regarded as deserving censure<sup>3</sup>. No man, with the exception of Montanus and his followers, formed smaller societies at his pleasure or caprice, and imagined that he might break the unity of the Church at his pleasure. The Churches were governed as they ought always to be, by the ruler who taught, and ordained, and censured, and confirmed—by the teacher who instructed a congregation, but did not rule or ordain—and by the assistant to that teacher; or, in other words, by primitive episcopacy. Though this mode of government was universally received as an Apostolical constitution, it was not valuable on that account alone, nor because of its usefulness and adaptation to the good order of every Christian society in all ages; it is valuable as having been adopted at that time when Christian liberty of conscience was most complete, and spiritual religion most unsuspected and most undoubted. No indirect or unworthy motives originated this form of Church government. It did not arise like the papacy from corruption or encroachment; for every Church was pure, and all were independent of each other. It did not arise from the desire to avoid the opposite extreme of any error which spiritual anxiety made the converts eager to shun; and which, begin-

Pagans professed a religion of Divine origin, though their religions were, in both instances, deeply corrupted. Pharisaism was a perversion of the religion of Moses, Paganism of the religion of Noah, Abraham, and the patriarchs. Both possessed harmless customs, which might not inconveniently be engrafted on the services of the Christian Church, which was only the purer and more completed form of the

one primæval religion, which had been common to the ancestors both of the Jews and Pagans. The only question was—which customs were useful and which were injurious to the struggling or incipient Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> Upon these letters of recommendation, or "*Litteræ Formatæ*," as they were technically styled, see Bingham, bk. ii. ch. iv. § 5, and bk. v. ch. i. § 3.

ning in a supposed necessity, sought in the next generation arguments for its defence from Scripture, which had never been alleged by the ancients, as may be said of the presbyterian polity; for no error at all had divided the Churches on the question of their government; and there could have been no necessity to make any rash choice of a system of rule. Neither was it defended by arguments derived from the wish to be free from the control of rulers, who, bearing the same name with those who had become objects of dislike, were therefore avoided and condemned, as may be said of many religious societies who abhor the name of bishop, either because of the abuse of the office, or because of the accidental privileges with which they have in this country been invested by the state. The constitution of the Church was so much of a popular nature, that the people were consulted, and the consent of the council of presbyters to the decisions of their bishop very generally required. Yet the primitive Christians were not united by the bond of holiness and spiritual religion alone; they perceived the necessity of outward discipline as well as inward dedication of the heart to God, and they bound themselves in their different societies by the ties of obedience to their ecclesiastical ruler, as well as by the affections of the heart, and the identity of the common faith. They were wise in doing so. They have left an example which the worshippers of Christ will do well to follow. Holiness of life alone, I must again repeat, has never been found a sufficient means of Christian union. The love of Christian to Christian, and therefore, the unity of the Churches, and the general peace of the Catholic Church of Christ, must be founded upon discipline, as well as upon the spiritual sanctification of the heart; or the several Churches which compose the one Church of Christ, cannot hope for the fulfilment of the prophecies which declare that there shall be one fold under one Shepherd. The testimony of all history assures us, that some submission to authority is as essential to the union of Christian brethren and the spiritual prosperity of Israel, as holiness of life itself. While we plead for toleration to the utmost, and abhor the usurpation over conscience which shall make the decree of a fallible priesthood the criterion of acceptable religion; while we speak peace to all, and earnestly pursue

union of heart, union of profession, of faith and action, never let us forget that union of discipline in submission to good government is the best means of promoting and cementing Christian love. A wise man will reconcile all truths, and will never carelessly reject the influence of authority, to prove his Christian liberty, or his imaginary superiority to his brethren; or his fancy that he can love those who are joined by fewer bonds of Christian affection, with equal attachment, to those who are united by many.

Never will there be harmony and peace among Christians till there is more agreement in discipline among those who fear God, and love the Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity. In the great contest which is even now reviving between the Church of Rome, in its endeavour to resume its power; and the Christians, who object to its errors, endeavouring to prevent that resumption of dominion; our dependence must be placed on discipline, rather than on personal piety, or self-dependent zeal. Church must be opposed to Church, institution to institution, system to system. The Romish priesthood is the army of the line on one side; and its efforts must be met by the ministers of the Episcopal Churches as the army of the line, on the other. The mass of the skirmishers and volunteers, the motley groups of the liberal, the infidel, and the sectarian, who, either from party caprice or affection, may range themselves on either side; may sometimes distress an opponent, or serve their allies; but they can never decide the fate of the battle, nor hope to be the leaders to victory. The Church of England, like the Church of Rome, must not be confounded with the crowd of sects and parties who engage in the great war between truth and error. Without the discipline of the well-trained soldiery of the Episcopacy, the firm bands of the Papacy will triumph; and if we hope to obtain the purity and the excellence of the primitive Churches of Christ, we shall follow the example of their submission to ecclesiastical authority as certainly as we shall adopt their faith, and pray to imitate their virtues. The early Christians not only avoided, as sins against God, and as crimes against society, divisions, heresies, and schisms in the Christian community; they were no less careful to permit no love of freedom to interfere with their obedience to the civil law, as far as the commands of God permitted, or with

their loyalty to the very prince who persecuted them. Their disinterested overcoming of evil with good, and loving their enemies in the midst of the most inveterate displays of hatred; as was shown in the days of Cyprian, when the pestilence drove the Pagan from his dearest friend; excited the astonishment and admiration of Carthage and the empire. The brotherly affection of Christians to each other, merely because they were the disciples of Christ, passed into a proverb; and provoked the envy of Julian in the succeeding century, when he called in vain upon the heathen philosopher, to imitate the benevolence which he still affected to regard with contempt and scorn.

From the discipline, and consequent affection of Christians to each other, we consider their morality and its motives.

The morality of the early Christians was not founded on any motives derived from earthly origin. The hope of reward, the fear of censure, the love of comfort, the enjoyment of ease, reputation, and peace of mind, are identified, it is true, with the observance of the moral duties; and these will and ought to influence the conduct. But the speculators on the philosophy of mind have submitted to the world, at various times, certain abstract standards of right and wrong. The primitive Christians, as well as their true spiritual successors in all ages, cared but little for such enquiries; and the motives which might be founded on them. Some tell us, with Lord Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume, that man is guided to right or wrong by a moral sense; whereas, the moral sense is but the development of the capacity to distinguish between them, and is guided partly by experience and partly by revelation, whether corrupted or uncorrupted. Dr. Beattie tells us we are guided by common sense. Dr. Price would be regulated by another word to disguise our ignorance, our understanding. Others have severally talked of the law of nature, the law of reason, the law of expediency, natural equity, natural justice, ability, and the greatest happiness of the greatest number. These are of modern times. The Christian man is not so instructed. He has but one really influential motive to morality, whether he be prince, peer, or gentleman, mechanic or peasant; it is, belief in revelation convincing him of sin, and leading him to the cross of Christ. Till a man comes to this, no matter

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what his philosophy or learning, his rank, or any good quality may be, he never can attain to the morality which is self-government, founded upon true motives. His language will be—

Talk they of morals ? Oh, Thou bleeding Lamb !  
Thou giver of new morals to mankind ;  
The grand morality is love to Thee.

“The love of Christ constraineth us,” was the language of St. Paul; and till this is the language of the heart, man never attains to pure and spiritual morality. This prevailed among the early Christians. They did not, therefore, abstain only from the grosser, or from the more refined licentiousness which was permitted by the world, from which they were separated in spirit, though not in person. They abstained from the appearance, and from the sources of evil. Exciting amusements, particular shows, splendid festivals, and all the sports, and pomps, and spectacles in which their heathen neighbours rejoiced, and in which the Pagan, or earthly mind, so much delights at present, were no less avoided than the vices to which they were supposed to be introductory<sup>4</sup>. Christians, in these things, have always been a separate and peculiar people. Humble, without affectation of humility; pure, beyond the suspicion of reproach, they were acquitted by the severest enquirers from censure; and the apologists for their faith could boldly draw the contrast between the lives of their accusers and the Christians, and defy the sternest of their persecutors to condemn their morality, however they might detest their creed<sup>5</sup>. How great would be the triumph of Christianity in the present day, if the numerous writers on the evidences of the religion of Jesus, could now enforce with equal justice the same powerful argument! The only really strong objection to the truth of Christianity, is the inconsistency of the lives of its professors, with the truths they profess to believe. Heathenism and Judaism, the two religions from which the first converts were drawn, both gave some customs and some

<sup>4</sup> The treatises of Tertullian, *de Spectaculis* and *de Corona*, depict the feelings of Christians upon these points. They were forbidden to attend the

gladiatorial shows. See Bingham, bk. xvi. ch. x. § 14.

<sup>5</sup> This is the great argument of Tertullian's *Apology*.

practices to the early worship, which were of doubtful utility; but the ceremonies they used in their public service were generally few and simple. Though no Church was superior to others, great respect was paid to those of Rome, of Alexandria, and of Antioch, as the seats of the principal Apostolic sees. Marriage was permitted to the clergy, and to all the people; but the unmarried life was more highly valued than the married life<sup>6</sup>. Private warning preceded public censure, if any member of a Church betrayed the sacredness of his Christian name; and expulsion from communion was rarely necessary. Solemn and frequent fasts were observed, especially on Fridays and in Lent<sup>7</sup>; and the principal festivals on which the great events of the birth, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit took place, were equally commemorated. The remains of the ancient liturgies<sup>8</sup>, or forms of prayer, used in many of the early Churches, are still extant. They were put together by the bishops of the several Churches, who generally adhered to the prayers which were already most known. There is, consequently, great similarity among them. They were simple and devout. The reading of Scripture, the frequent use of the Lord's Prayer, short ejaculations, and public preaching, were component parts of every service on the Lord's day. The death of Christ was usually commemorated in the communion, as it ought still to be, every Lord's day. Hymns were sung as a part of public worship; and those who were not known to be Christians, with those who had not, though they were Christians, been already admitted to the communion, were directed to depart from the Churches during the celebration of that more solemn service<sup>9</sup>. The religious education of

<sup>6</sup> See Bishop Hall's "Honour of the married Clergy," Works, vol. ix. Pratt's edition; and Bingham's Antiquities, book iv. chap. v. § 5; but especially the work of Calixtus, "De Conjugio Clericorum," 4to, Franc. 1653, where the question is elaborately discussed.

<sup>7</sup> See Gunning's Lent Fast, recently published at Oxford, in the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

<sup>8</sup> Palmer's Antiquities of the English Liturgy, in the preliminary dissertations, Collection of the principal liturgies, &c. translated from the Latin

of M. Renaudot and P. le Brun, Dublin, 1822; and Bingham, Eccles. Antiq. book xiii. chap. v.; Renaudot, Collectio Liturgiarum Orientalium, 4to, Paris, 1716; Assemani Codex Liturgicus Eccl. Universæ, 13 vols. 4to, Romæ.

The principal festivals of the Christian were made to correspond with those of the Jewish Church, which commemorated the events in the prior dispensation. Christianity is only spiritualized Judaism. Both are forms of the one true and only religion.

<sup>9</sup> See Bingham, bk. xiii. ch. i. § 4.

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their children was an object of the first importance. Great attention was paid to the constant worship of God in their families at home; and the good providence of God was solemnly acknowledged by more than a half sentence, rapidly whispered, as if the master of the house was ashamed of the slightest notice of the Deity before and after meals. They were attentive to their duties in all these things, not as if a task had been imposed upon them, but as if religion was a privilege, and the service of God a delight. The salt of cheerful, active zeal, was on every sacrifice they offered. The fire of the love of God, on the altar of every heart, was never permitted to expire. The public worship, the private prayer, the strict education, and the conscientious, willing submission to the discipline and authority of the Churches to which they were united, all, by God's blessing upon them, contributed to the formation of their exemplary character; but the principal means by which they maintained that incessant flame of devotion, which thus kindled in their hearts, and so constantly ascended in the incense of prayer and praise towards heaven, was the reverent study, and deep and holy love which they bore to the sacred Scriptures. The fathers of the early Church<sup>1</sup>, the preachers of the primitive times of Christianity, urged upon the people the never-ceasing reading of the inspired books. They were read by children, by the catechumens, by the common people, by all Christians of all classes. Every conceivable argument is used by the primitive teachers to persuade and to encourage the people to devote their whole energies to the perusal and study of the word of God; and thus it was that the one holy Catholic, Apostolic Church of God flourished and abounded in all virtue, goodness, and truth. Consisting of many independent episcopal communions, it composed one great and blessed society. External religion was so united with internal spirituality, that every Church was at peace within itself. Discipline was observed, and liberty was not destroyed. The Scriptures were the guide; the Church was the best assistant to their interpretation. Truth, humility, and spiritual religion, were the uniform characteristics of the converts; and let us hope and pray, that whatever were the evils and errors which

<sup>1</sup> See Bingham, bk. xiii. ch. iv. § 8.

arose in subsequent ages to deform, and many of which still disgrace the Churches of Christ, that the union of faith and love, of spirituality and of discipline, which renders the picture of the Churches of the three first centuries so pleasing, may be once more restored to mankind. We may confidently rely upon the certainty of the fulfilment of those prophecies which declare the glory of the Church in the latter days. The true glory of a religious society is freedom from the abuses both of authority and of liberty, so that there shall be no usurpation to oppress, and no needless schism to divide; while there shall prevail, at the same time, the union of holiness and brotherly love, submission to authority, the pursuit of peace, and the dedication of the body, soul, and spirit to God. Let us trust that the day shall arrive, when Rome will resign its pretensions, and the sectarian his caprices—when love and affection will be followed above all things, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, like the dews of heaven, descend in holy power upon the hearts of all men. That will be the true millennium when every Church of Christ shall abound with such converts as these, when Church shall contend with Church no more, but all be at peace with each other, and form once more the united Catholic Church of Christ. Then will the human race attain upon this earth the highest happiness of which its fallen and renovated nature is capable. The curse shall be as much removed, as the mixture of unavoidable evil with the superabounding good shall permit. The blood of the atonement shall not have been shed in vain, for the generations that shall exist upon earth. The prophecies that reveal the spiritual triumphs of the spiritual Church shall be all accomplished; and the tree of life shall again be planted in the earth, which shall be once more the paradise of God. The serpent's head shall be bruised, and the nations be no more troubled with the poison of ignorance and temptation. The Scriptures will have effected the object of their divine inspiration, so far as this lower world is concerned. The Church will have brought her sons and her daughters to the gates of that better society of heaven, which is the promised successor to the spiritual society on earth. War shall have ceased. Political hatreds among nations, internal dissensions, exasperating distinctions, all that separate heart from heart,

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and brother from brother, shall all be done away when the time of the promise shall have arrived, that all the world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and all the Churches of the world have become the Church, the one Catholic Church of God. It must and it will be. Though the anticipation of such a time appear now to be the dream of a fool, or the tale told by an idiot; yet it shall be. The declarations of inspiration have the force of a law of nature over the destinies of mankind, and prophecy is but an anticipation of history. The prophecy shall be accomplished to its utmost. The human race, through all the languages, and nations, and empires of the earth, will assuredly become one great, united, religious, Christian family. The word of the Lord hath spoken it; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word of that God shall ever pass away. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, Son of the living God, on this earth, as it is in heaven. Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?

## CHAPTER III.

### *The Causes of the Persecution of Christians by Christians.*

WE are now to consider the principal event of history since the death of the last of the Apostles—the accession of Constantine to the empire, together with the causes of persecution by the civil power, after it became professedly Christian. We are chiefly interested in the detail of the past in reference to this one point. We shall find that a close and impartial examination of the narrative will compel us to come to some conclusions which are not generally received regarding the sources of the conduct which we condemn in the first Christian emperor. History can never be rightly understood, if we look only at the results of events, without reference to the origin of those events. We are accustomed to call the result, for instance, of the various efforts to restore to the Christian Churches their primitive equality with, and their independence of, the see of Rome—the Reformation. But no man understands the causes of the Reformation unless he reads and studies the state of the public opinion in the various countries of Europe; the interests of the holders of civil and ecclesiastical power; the depth of the degradation of the popular ignorance; the excesses of both parties; the justifiable and unjustifiable arguments of each; the blessings obtained; the difficulty of obtaining them, and the consequent necessity of upholding them at all hazards so long as liberty, truth, and the mental energy, which proceeds from their union, are valued among mankind. So it is also with regard to the great change under Constantine. We are accustomed to talk of the persecutions of the emperors; the corruptions of Christianity occasioned by the union of the Church with the state, when Constantine ceased to be pagan, and patronized the worship of Christ rather than the homage to Jupiter. Inferences are deduced in the most illogical manner from the general proposition,

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that, because there was a change in the imperial religion and persecution did not cease, that persecution is to be attributed to the caprice of the sovereign. It is supposed, too, that because paganism ceased to be the religion of the state, that change, also, was owing to the same will, independently of causes which the civil power could not controul, and to which it would have been compelled to yield. We must briefly consider both points if we would derive those lessons from history which shall be useful to us in the present state of society. Unless we can do this, history is more useless than an old almanack.

We will mention first, before we explain the causes of persecution of Christian by Christian, the proofs that Christianity had now made so much progress that its predicted triumph was inevitable.

We have related its conquest over the persecutions of the mob and the philosophers, the magistrates and the emperors, to the time of Diocletian. I have no where seen the remarkable fact insisted upon with adequate regard to its importance, that the last persecutors themselves—the worst, vilest, severest, and cruellest—published edicts in favour of Christianity before they died; and that they themselves, the last pagan rulers of the empire, before Constantine obtained the supreme authority, and before any rescript had consequently been published against paganism, struck the first blow against the heathen superstition.

Galerius and Maxentius, Maximin and Licinius, were the princes who together with Constantine governed the empire between the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in the year 305, and the year 324, when, by the defeat and death of Licinius, Constantine became the sole emperor. So powerful had Christianity become, as holding among nearly all the Romans, at least, divided sway with paganism, that every one of those emperors, whatever had been his bitterness against the faith of Christ, endeavoured, to a greater or less extent, to propitiate the Christians, and to obtain favour from the Deity by occasionally or eventually, in life or at his death, encouraging the Christian religion.

Galerius died in Nicomedia, in April, 311, before the edict of Milan; and before the alleged appearance to Constantine of the cross in the heavens. This arbitrary and savage

barbarian had long been distinguished above his brother persecutors for his profligate debaucheries and atrocious cruelties<sup>1</sup>. This was the superhuman monster whose diversion consisted in calling favourite bears by fondling names, and gazing on them as they sucked the blood of his fellow-men, without devouring their flesh, as they had been carefully instructed. Blood was shed at his banquets. It was as perfume to his nostrils, while the contortions of the victims were the delight, and their groans were the music to his soul. He revelled in the pleasure of torture. The Christian sufferer, of whom, as before remarked, it is becoming unfashionable to speak with pity for his agonies, or joy at his patience, was racked and tortured, and then burnt at a slow fire. The executioner proved his zeal for his prince by studying to enlarge and to prolong the pangs of his victim. The soles of the feet were burnt away from the bones. The body was burnt slowly to death with torches, not too powerful, that the pain might be endured more continuously. To lengthen life and to extend the suffering together, the mouth and the face were refreshed from time to time with cold water till the flesh was broiled away, and the fire could affect the more vital parts of the frame. What a demon is man to man when the heart is left to its own wretched movements, and no restraint is laid upon them by the public law, the voice of the people, the influence of love and kindred, or the power of an awakened conscience. The same ferocity which first visited the Christian was soon applied to the heathen who offended this ferocious tyrant. His apologists condemn his officers and magistrates. These, however, were as fingers and the hand which obeys the will. They were only the lance or the dagger, of which the utmost can be said, that it sometimes kills where it was only intended to torment. At length the summons came for him also. The miseries of his death-bed were as terrible as the pangs of his own tormented sufferers, without the consolations of their hope and faith. They are too loathsome to be recorded.

<sup>1</sup> The fearful cruelties of Galerius, as here enumerated, will be seen to be not over-coloured by an examina-

tion of the passages collected by Kortholt, in his account of this emperor's persecution, p. 493.

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His attendants fled in horror from his frightful cries. He sends to Apollo and to Esculapius; but there was no voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. He demanded the aid of the best physicians of the age. They were brought by force. They were murdered when he remained uncured. "None of my companions can cure you," at length said a Christian physician,—“God has afflicted you. Your disease is not subject to our skill. I can die with my companions; but remember the war you have waged against a divine religion, and then learn of whom you should pray for a remedy.” Then it was that, subdued by pain, he declared that he would rebuild the churches, and satisfy the God of the Christians. He called his superior officers around him. He commanded them to put a stop to the persecution, and dictated the edict which Lactantius has recorded—“to permit the people to resume the exercises of Christianity.” About a fortnight before his death, the edict was made known at Nicomedia, where the persecution had begun eight years before. His character has been related as it has been now given by his contemporaries, Lactantius and Eusebius; and more dependence is to be placed upon them than upon the apologists who lived after him, and admired his military excellences. He died as miserably, as he had lived disgracefully. Paganism was not honoured by his virtues. Christianity was advanced by the conquest of its martyrs over his cruelties; and by the testimony of his recovering reason—that he could only seek peace in acknowledging in sickness and in death, the God whom he had insulted and dishonoured in prosperity and health.

Of Maxentius, who lost his life near to Rome, in the October of the following year, it is only necessary to say, that though he died fighting against Constantine at the head of the pagan party, he had once granted an edict of toleration to the Christians. This occurred in Rome in the year 312. He rescinded the edict in jealousy of the splendid presents, which were made by the faithful, to that Church. After this time he became an unrelenting persecutor; but the very fact of his inconsistency was another reason for compelling attention to the now openly clashing religions; and Christianity always flourishes in the open air of enquiry

and discussion. The only climate in which the tree of life fades, is that of the foggy sluggish atmosphere of indifference and lukewarmness. BOOK II.  
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Maximin, another of the autocrats of the empire, in the year 307, like Galerius, was one of those more personally cruel persecutors who delight in contemplating the sufferings of their victims. Exasperated at the conversion of one of his magistrates by the firmness of a martyr in Egypt, he caused them both to be beheaded; and killed with his own hand Ingraphus, the servant of the martyr Mennas, for daring to profess himself a Christian. In the calm state of society in which we live in the present day, the very decency of manners which prevails among even nominal Christians, would have been considered in some former ages of the world, an unattainable height of moral virtue. The very leaves of the tree of life have been scattered for the healing of the nations. We are consequently unable, from the prevalence of those better principles, to imagine, unless we read its wretched details, the utter wickedness which debased the life of Maximin. The knowledge of sin is not wisdom; and it cannot, therefore, be necessary to relate it. It is sufficient to say, that he was all that we abhor. His infamy, cruelty, and treachery, rendered him the proper admirer, apologist, and defender of the rack and the flame; of the "elegant mythology." Yet even this man, if he could not overthrow paganism by his abominable idolatries of wickedness and cruelty, gave a heavy blow and severe discouragement to its influence when he ordered all the priests of his gods to be put to death because he failed of success, after the oracles had predicted triumph. He was seized of his last illness soon after this massacre. His death was worthy of his life. It is alike unjust, unphilosophical, and unchristian, to attend the bed of the dying; merely to watch the accents of delirium; and to infer from the wanderings of a diseased brain the final state of the sufferer in sickness. Yet if the soul on the verge of its present state of existence is able, as some have believed, to look forward beyond the veil which separates the visible from the invisible; and to shrink back in vain upon life from the undefinable consciousness, a terrific instinct, of a heavier doom than present misery—if this may be a law of our nature which shall only be

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developed when the conscious hopelessness of life compels the retrospect of the past and the anticipation of the future—we may more justly suppose it to have taken place in such persons as Maximin, and at such moments as those which preceded his death; when<sup>2</sup> finding that his god and his priests, his ambition and his hopes, had all alike failed him, and that he was surrounded by enemies from whom he could not escape—he gorged himself with meat and wine, as for the last time; and completed his banquet with poison. The mixture prevented the immediate death he had anticipated, but produced long and insufferable agony. He then began to acknowledge another god—the God of Christianity, to whom every knee shall bow, whether in this world or that which is to come. He published an edict in favour of the Christians; and though he palliates and excuses his former conduct, he allows the Christians to rebuild their temples and resume their alienated revenues. Four days he lived, convulsed in tortures. He threw himself on the ground, tore up the earth, and devoured it<sup>3</sup>. He believed that he saw the end of things created; and the Judge of mankind upon his throne, surrounded with the spirits of those whom he had persecuted to their death. He cried out in pain, exclaiming, that his counsellors, not himself, had been guilty. He confessed his sins. He called on Christ. He prayed with tears. He died uttering howlings of remorse and sorrow—of delirium and despair. The Judge of the earth will do right.

—————“draw the curtain close,  
And let us all to meditation.”

But the death of Maximin was a discouragement to the magistrates of the empire any longer to persecute Christianity.

Licinius, elevated in the empire by Galerius, the atrocious and dissolute enemy of Christianity, was avaricious, ignorant, and cruel. He was made Augustus, in A.D. 307, by Galerius, to please whom he must have professed to have hated Christianity. He joined in the celebrated edict of Milan, which gave unlimited toleration to the Christians; and after the death of Maximin he put those to death who had been most active in persecuting the Christians. He caused the priests

<sup>2</sup> See Le Beau, Hist. of the Empire, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> See Lactant. de Morte Persecutorum, cap. xlix.

and prophets of Jupiter Phidius to be put to the torture to compel them to reveal the manner in which they had endeavoured to serve the cause of Maximin. Before his death he came to open collision with Constantine, and relapsed from appearing to encourage Christianity, into avowed paganism. He ridiculed the devotion of his rival, and gathered round him a train of priests and soothsayers to predict success to his undertakings. He consulted the oracle of Apollo at Miletus, and received a discouraging answer, which he professed, however, to despise; and in his bitterness against Constantine ventured upon a measure which, more than any other, must have tended to dispirit and intimidate the pagans. He called his friends together on the eve of the last decisive battle which was to be fought between the rival forces of paganism and Christianity, and professed to put the cause of the two religions to issue. "If the Lord be God, follow Him," said the prophet of Israel; "but if Baal, then follow him."—"If this forlorn and obscure God of the Christians," said Licinius, "unknown in his origin as in his existence, overcome so many powerful deities, we will address our prayers to Him; we will yield ourselves to this victorious God; we will build Him altars on the ruins of those which our fathers have raised. But if, as they have assured us, our gods on this day signalize their protection over this empire—if they give the victory to our arms and to our swords, we will pursue to the death, and drown in their own blood a sacrilegious sect which holds them in utter contempt."—He defied the God of Christianity. He met Constantine at Adrianople, and was defeated. The bold challenge which preceded one battle was followed by the very opposite conduct, before that which succeeded. He again rallied some forces, obtained assistance from the barbarians on the frontier, and found himself at the head of a hundred and thirty thousand men. Forgetting the declaration he had made previous to the battle at Adrianople, that if he was successful he would be a pagan; if unsuccessful he would embrace the religion of Constantine his victor, he now had recourse to new divinities, as if he had been betrayed by the former, and gave himself up to the superstitions of magic. He imagined that a divine virtue attached to the standard of the cross which had been lately adopted by Constantine. He warned

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his soldiers to avoid the formidable sign, though they were about to fight against it; though they ought to have been incited to attack it, not to flee from it. He desired them to turn away their eyes from it, as there was a magic character in it that was fatal to him.—Having thus addressed the soldiers in language which, by a strange infatuation, must appear to have been the most ill-adapted to encourage them, he promised to conduct them through dangers; and caused the images of new unknown gods, neither of Christ nor Jupiter, to be carried before the army. He met Constantine at Chrysopolis. The shout of the troops of the Christian emperor terrified the soldiers of Licinius. They fled at the first attack. Fifty-five thousand were killed or deserted; the remainder surrendered; and thus terminated the battle which closed the more open enmity between paganism and Christianity<sup>4</sup>. All these changes of opinion in the very persecutors who had been the bitterest enemies of Christianity at the very time when the lives of the Christians were so evidently purer than those of the pagans, when their chief became the emperor, when their courage had been tried, when their Scriptures began to attract the attention of the philosophers, when the noble and the wealthy became their friends; and the poor and the despised were relieved by their bounty and admitted into their communion, must have materially tended to facilitate the plans of Constantine. Before we consider the edict of Milan, which conferred the boon of toleration and protection on Christians, we must briefly survey the principal actions of Constantine to be enabled to understand better that great historical problem—the origin of the causes of persecution by Christians against Christians in the Church so soon after they were emancipated from the yoke and terrors of paganism. We shall find the principal causes to be these four:—

The conduct of the Donatists in disturbing the peace of the empire by their factious opposition to their brethren and to the emperor.

<sup>4</sup> I am taking the account of the three rulers from the several chapters of Le Beau's *Lower Empire*, vol. i. 8vo, London, 1770. See in the different years with the marginal refer-

ences. The original writers, however, which he quotes, have not been neglected, and Pagi, Baronius, and Tillemont, have been consulted.

Constantine's subsequent fear of the recurrence of similar consequences in the disputes between the Arians and their opponents. BOOK II.  
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The false notion that the Christian emperor succeeded to the Divine power granted to his pagan predecessors.

The Catholic Church did not perceive, that whenever truth, or the desire to hold right opinions respecting God and our destiny, is regarded as a duty to God; the obedience which the subject owes to the magistrate becomes more conventional, than in those arbitrary governments where the will of the prince, or of the state, is the sole law, whether in things divine or human. Where truth is obtained by reflection and evidence, and not by authority only, there is always liberty. Where there is liberty there may be much error; which must be removed rather by an appeal to argument, than by the edict of the magistrate. The power of the imperial Christian magistrate was considered to be in all respects the same as that of the imperial pagan magistrate; and opposition to his will became a crime. Schism was rebellion; heresy was a political offence; and orthodoxy was allegiance; but schism, heresy, and orthodoxy, were defined as the sovereign pleased, and not as the Church decided; and the melancholy story remains to be told, of the caprice of the magistrate, and the mutual hatred of contending Christians.

The fourth cause was, (and this in all after-ages through nearly thirteen centuries,) that the laws of Constantine against the first heretical disturbers of his government, having described the offenders against the civil law by their opinions and not by their crimes only; the laws were supposed, in subsequent periods, to have been enacted against the abstract opinion only; and thus a precedent was set at the commencement of the civil establishment of Christianity, which became the principal foundation of the persecutions by the civil power which succeeded Constantine—by their episcopal followers at the dissolution of the Roman empire, and by the bishops of Rome, till the age of Luther.

The conduct of the Donatists in disturbing the peace of the empire by their factious opposition to their brethren and

to the emperor, was the first cause of the persecution of Christian by Christian.

The whole conduct of Constantine prior to the council of Nice, demonstrates the truth of this affirmation, (and a fearful lesson we shall see was given to the world at the time when more halcyon days of peace and rest were supposed to be near,) that if the liberty which Christianity gives, is perverted to needless schisms in a Church, those schisms, without any persecution on the part of the civil power, will lead men to oppose their ecclesiastical superiors; to heresy in religious faith; to rebellion against princes; and thus will occasion general scandal to religion. Miserable, indeed, is the picture which is to be soon presented to us, when the conduct of the first dividers of the Church compelled the jealousy of the secular power; and laid the foundation of that intolerable code which still remains in the laws of the Church of Rome; and which must be repealed if mankind would hope for repose in the profession of a common Christianity.

That we may vindicate the first Christian emperor from the charge of persecution, we will briefly survey his principal actions. The Christian religion was perceived, at the time when he more openly professed Christianity, to be the only refuge in the empire from the licentious cruelty of the profligate rulers we have mentioned. Constantine, however, prior to the defeat of Maxentius, immediately after the supposed appearance of the miraculous cross in the heavens, had inculcated and defended toleration, though he had not openly avowed an attachment to Christianity. Constantine died 22nd May, in the year 337. He was born in the year 272, or 274, either in Britain<sup>5</sup>, or in Naissa, in Dardania, now Servia. The controversies of the age in which he lived must have soon made him acquainted with the war between paganism and its rival. Educated in the court of his father till the age of eighteen, when he was sent as an hostage to the palace of Diocletian, he must have witnessed the attempts of Constantius to evade the execution of the scandalous de-

<sup>5</sup> Alford, in his Ecclesiastical Annals, seems to lie in the opposite direction. There is more truth in regard to the empress Helena. warmly contends for the British origin of Constantine (see Baron. A. D. 306, § 12), but the weight of argument

crees of the emperor; and was thus early taught to abhor this severe and needless persecution. More conversant, however, with a camp than with a court, in consequence of his being so much with the army after the insult offered to his mother, when she was divorced by her husband on his obtaining the supreme power, Constantine does not seem to have been more, for a long time, than an ambitious, intrepid, prudent, soldier. Though the political and religious disputes of his age demanded attention, he must unavoidably have professed paganism, or concealed his Christianity, so long as he was an obedient and active soldier of the intolerant Galerius and Diocletian. He gradually rose in the military service to be a tribune of the first order. Galerius, under the pretence of giving him the opportunity of more effectually distinguishing himself, is said to have exposed him to great and needless danger. He obtained so much reputation by repeated instances of high courage, and by uniform success, both in personal combats and at the head of the troops, with the more distinguished chieftains of the barbarians and in situations of extreme peril; that Galerius became jealous of his estimation, and resolved to destroy him. Constantius, his father, repeatedly solicited permission that his son might return to him in Britain. Constantine having at length obtained a conditional promise from Galerius that he should leave him in the morning, made his escape from Illyria; and destroying all the post-horses after he had used them to prevent pursuit, safely arrived in Britain, having met his father at Boulogne. Soon after his arrival, his father died at York, and Constantine, both by his dying father and the soldiers in his service, was declared his successor<sup>6</sup>.

He was now (A.D. 306) thirty-three years of age, and five years elapsed before he announced himself to be the friend of the Christian religion. He began his reign, however, by an edict of toleration authorizing to the Christians the free exercise of their religion<sup>7</sup>. He was attentive to the internal affairs of his provinces—Gaul and Britain; and he then proceeded to the defence of the frontiers. We have no proof that at this time he had thought of embracing Chris-

<sup>6</sup> See Lactant. cap. xxiv. Baronii § 5.  
Annals, A. D. 306, § 9. Pagi ad An. <sup>7</sup> A. D. 312, see Pagi ad An. § 16.

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tianity. He obtained in this year a victory over the Franks; and condemned the prisoners to the unjust and cruel death of contending with wild beasts in the theatre at Treves. The prisoners met the beasts, and permitted themselves to be torn in pieces without a tear. The virtue of the savage seems to be ever the same,—firmness in bearing pain, and defying his enemies to derive satisfaction from the least exhibition of weakness. The same characteristic marked the North American warriors at the first discovery of the continent. Christianity softened its convert at a subsequent period; but the native cruelty of Constantine seems never to have been entirely eradicated. Religion frequently ameliorates, without wholly subduing, the power of inward evil. We pass by, his marriage with Fausta, the daughter of Maximin, in the year 307; his reception of Maximin in 308, and his defeating his treachery when he endeavoured to corrupt his troops in 309; the romantic story of the father imploring his daughter to consent to the murder of her husband; her discovering the plot to Constantine, and the unjustifiable fatal blow upon the person of an unconscious slave, with the reproaching of the confronted murderer by his intended victim. We pass by also the sacrificing to Apollo (A.D. 310) at the station near the Rhine; his embellishing of Treves where he resided; his wars against the barbarians, and the reputation attendant upon his success; the invitations of the citizens of Rome to deliver them from Maxentius, his more oppressive coadjutor in the empire, together with the rapturous manner in which he was welcomed at Autun.—These events have nothing to do with the question of persecution. They prove only his authority and influence in the empire. They contrast most strongly with the rapacity, cruelty, and vileness of the other emperors. He was virtuous, just, and gentle, despite all his faults, when compared with them; and the time had arrived when his thoughtful and reflecting mind was at length brought to decide on the preference of Christianity to paganism; and he resolved to place himself at the head of the powerful Christian party. This decision was made in the year 311. The heathens believed that great temporal success was a proof of the favour of the gods. He had received much prosperity up to this period of his life. He may have attributed his felicity not to fortune, not to chance,

probably not to Apollo, to whom he had lately sacrificed; nor to any of the companions of Apollo, nor the now long exploded Olympus. He might remember the arguments which he must certainly have heard in favour of Christianity. The reflections which arose in his mind appeared to be his own. The Creator of the human mind acts upon the human mind, sometimes, as in the case of the prophets of old, by an impression more than human; sometimes by continuing and impressing the trains of thought which present themselves by relative suggestion. He thus acts with the mind by the laws of mind; but whenever a thought so arises, and so remains upon the consciousness, the memory, and the conscience, that permanent change of motive and lasting benefit are the results, then we are justified in saying—the Holy Spirit of God is present with that mind. This I believe to have been the case when Constantine forsook the worship of Apollo, to whom he had offered in the preceding year; and resolving to become, to the best of his imperfect knowledge, a Christian, he commanded the figure of the cross to supersede the eagle; and in the following year directed that his soldiers should wear the same emblem on their shields and arms. He told Eusebius that his own temporal success had demonstrated to him that there was one God and a providence; though he did not add that Christianity is only that manner in which the providence of God has made provision for the spiritual happiness and improvement of the spirit of man. It is possible that these reflections might occur to Constantine. It certainly appears to have been for his temporal interest that he should now become decided, in the moral grounds of his opposition to Maxentius; and prove to the empire that the war was not a war of ambition; but of virtue against vice, happiness against misery, and of a pure and holy religion against the consecrated impurities and blood-stained altars, of the desecrated temples of Juno, Mars, and Venus.

What, then, is the conclusion to which we may arrive respecting the cross which Constantine informed Eusebius he saw on his way from Gaul to Italy to meet Maxentius? Eusebius attributes the conversion of Constantine to the sort of reasoning on God and Providence which I have now mentioned; that he considered his own prosperity and the

deaths of the principal persecutors; that his conclusion after these contemplations was, to worship the God in whom his father had believed, as the one God; and that, when he was praying to this God, then the celebrated vision was seen. He saw in the afternoon, in the sky, over the sun, after he had prayed to God for assistance in the approaching contest, a shining cross, with the inscription, "BY THIS OVERCOME." He related the fact to Eusebius, and swore to its truth, while many of the soldiers were still living. The next night he had a vision to the same effect, and he then ordered the cross to supersede the eagle, and to be engraven on the shields and arms. What are we to think of this story<sup>8</sup>? Jortin gives the three opposite opinions, that it was a miracle, a pious fraud, or a solar halo.

Those who wish to know if it was a solar halo, may read Fabricius<sup>9</sup>. Those who think it was a pious fraud, may derive their arguments from certain inconsistencies in the after-life of Constantine. Those who think it was a miracle, would do well to remember, that there are four very decided objections to this supposition. First, a miracle was not necessary. Christianity was doing its predicted work. It had conquered, and it was conquering. The conviction was

<sup>8</sup> On the night of the dream, before the decisive battle between Constantine and Maxentius, he saw the vision which commanded him to place the *labarum* on the shields and arms of the soldiers; not on the night of the day on which he first saw the *labarum* itself. 'Ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας ἡδὴ τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκλινούσης, αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν ἐξῆν ἐν αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἡλίου σταυροῦ τροπαιῶν, ἐκ φωτὸς συνιστάμενον, γραφὴν τε αὐτῷ συνήφθαι, λέγουσαν, Τοῦτω νικά. *Horis diei meridianis, sole in occasum vergente, crucis tropæum in cælo ex luce conflatum, soli superpositum, ipsis oculis se vidisse, affirmavit, cum hujusmodi inscriptione, Hac vince.*—Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 28, edit. fol. Reding, p. 515. This is repeated from Eusebius by Sozomen, i. 3. Other early ecclesiastical histories contain the same story, as, for example, Philostorg. i. 6; Niceph. vii. 29, and viii. 3.

The sentence will bear (see Jortin's remarks on Eccl. History) this mean-

ing. He saw, that is, believed he saw, a cross over the sun; and it appeared to him, when thinking of the approaching battle: "fear not, believe in the cross, and thou shalt conquer." The whole difficulty is in the words *γραφὴν λέγουσαν*, a speaking writing, or an inscription appearing to speak. If *γραφὴ* may be, as is supposed, to denote a picture, the difficulty is removed.

<sup>9</sup> The treatise of Fabricius, De Cruce quam vidit Constantinus Magnus, is found in his *Bibliotheca Græca*, vi. 8. He gives many engraved representations of the form in which it might have appeared, p. 20. It is well known that this incident has led to much discussion, and that the truth of the narrative has been warmly contested. It would occupy too much space were we to attempt to enumerate even the writings to which the controversy has given origin. A good synopsis of the subject may be seen in Walch's *Hist. Novi Test.* p. 1564.

encreasing, that the empire must take refuge in a better religion, at least, than that of paganism ; which consecrated vileness and murder, and changed the rulers of the earth into demons. It cannot be imagined that a miracle should be wrought to allay those anxieties of a wise man which, with Constantine, were only the sources of that caution and prudence, by which he commanded or deserved success. Such a miracle would destroy its own object. There is no evidence that the event took place at all. Constantine alone saw it. No man of his officers is mentioned as a spectator. No voice was heard, as at the miraculous appearances in the New Testament. He might have believed he saw it; and if he had uttered an exclamation of surprise, or pointed with his hand, many of the courtiers would have remarked whatever their imperial master affirmed he saw. The cloud would be like a camel, if the prince thought it resembled a camel.—Another reason against its being regarded as miraculous is, that the incident may be easily explained by interpreting the expression, *an inscription*, saying, “In this overcome,” in a wider sense ; as if the appearance of the cross seemed to have the meaning.—The last reason is, that it is contrary to the analogy of the appearances mentioned in the Old and New Testament. These were, the flame from heaven manifesting the presence of God, with a voice speaking from the excellent glory. When our Lord appeared, He was seen as the God of the patriarchs, surrounded with the glory in which, before his Incarnation, He had been accustomed to appear. He was thus seen by St. Stephen at his martyrdom, and by St. Paul at his conversion. The last time that He appeared was to St. John in the Isle of Patmos ; and there is something very wonderful and awful, that he who had reposed on His bosom at the supper—he who had been His own familiar friend—he upon whom the full powers of the Pentecostal inspiration rested, should fall at His feet as dead ! No appearances of this nature could be expected by Constantine. No new appearances, other than those already vouchsafed, could be anticipated ; and many other reasons also, could be adduced to lead us to infer that the appearance to Constantine was not miraculous.

What, then, is likely to have been the origin of the

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labarum<sup>1</sup>? It was probably an imagination, or a spectral illusion similar to that which Colonel Gardiner is reported to have beheld, when that religious impression on his mind was made, which lasted for life. The most minute circumstance, which is overruled to permanent and spiritual good, may be called miraculous, in the sense of its being unusual, and attended with a blessing. But whatever may have been the real history of the appearance of the cross to Constantine, he obtained the victory over the last pagan enemy, but one; that still remained to oppose, on the field, the soldiers of the cross. The final battle with Maxentius was fought nine miles from Rome in the year 312<sup>2</sup>. Maxentius had been a persecutor both of pagans and of Christians; the joy, therefore, of the people, at his defeat, was excessively great. Italy dedicated to Constantine a crown and buckler of gold. Africa established priests for the worship of his family. The Roman senate erected a statue of gold in his honour, and the Basilica, and the triumphal arch that still bears his name. The language of the inscription<sup>3</sup> on this arch, though not Christian, was not so entirely pagan as before. It did not speak of the gods of Olympus, but declared, that by the Divinity, Constantine had been enabled to deliver them. Now also was the golden moment when the cross was first raised before the people of Rome, by the ruler of Rome. A statue was erected to him in the public square. The emperor placed a cross in the hand, with an inscription, declaring that it was by the cross alone he had delivered the city from tyrants, and restored the senate to its splendour. From the external demonstrations of joy, he proceeded to give them the greatest sources of satisfaction. He disbanded the pretorian guards. Though he punished some of the adherents of his enemy, he restored others to their forfeited estates, and spared their

<sup>1</sup> The labarum, or cross, which Constantine gave to his soldiers, was a pole like that of a lance, with a cross-bar, surmounted by a crown, with a monogram of the name of Christ. A purple square veil hung from the cross-bar, jewelled; and above the cross-bar were the figures of the emperor and his children. The name *labarum* is supposed to be a word com-

posed of the first letters, which describe the favoured legion to which it was first committed.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. H. E. ix. 9. Vit. Const. i. 39.

<sup>3</sup> The learned Cardinal Noris published a dissertation upon this inscription, in which he establishes that it was not erected until four years after Constantine's triumph over Maxentius.

lives. He discouraged the laws against informers. He restored power to the senate, and filled its ranks with the best citizens of the empire. He diminished the taxes. He relieved the poor. He embellished the city. He restored many ruined towns to opulence and grandeur; and repaired, to the utmost of his power, the effects of tyranny and war. He was desirous to be regarded as the father of his people, and to be a blessing to his too long oppressed and harassed empire.

But outward tokens of satisfaction; statues of marble, gold, or silver; the lessening of military arrogance; the restoration of the pardoned criminal to temporal possessions; the extension of public liberty; the providing for good government; the relief from taxation; the rebuilding of the waste places of the land; and the extension of the commerce and agriculture of a country (the latter attracted but little attention at this time), not all these together, though they form in the aggregate so large a sum of human happiness; are worthy to be compared with that better blessing which Constantine now imparted to all the districts and provinces of his empire. As literary happiness is more valuable than inferior enjoyments—as poetical pleasures are the highest species of intellectual felicity—so the spiritual felicity, the taste and the love for the religious enjoyments of the soul in communion and peace with God, is the most elevated of all the delights which can please and gratify the mind and its powers. He, therefore, who gives religious truth to his friends and neighbours, gives to them the fountain of the fulness of joy; and this was the boon which Constantine bestowed upon his people.

The first edicts which he published in favour of the Christians are not extant<sup>4</sup>. Having, however, assumed the pontificate, which at that period always accompanied the supreme power<sup>5</sup>, and which he probably deemed essential to his

<sup>4</sup> Quæ autem edicta pro Christianis ipso imperii ingressu Romæ vel aliis in provinciis promulgaverit, non extant.—Baronii Annal. A.D. 312, § 88.

<sup>5</sup> Simul enim atque summum imperium quisque accipiebat, amictus ei sacerdotalis a pontificibus offerebatur, et continuo pontificis maximi titulum

usurpabat, &c.—Zosimus, lib. iv. ap. Baron.

The historians both apologize for this act of Constantine; but in conjunction with the statement, the reader who is interested in the subject should consult the remarks of Pagi, A.D. 312, § 17, seqq.

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exercising authority in sacred matters; he proceeded to give the sanction of the religious and civil supremacy of Roman law and magistracy to the long persecuted Christianity. It was necessary, perhaps, that the highest ecclesiastical authority, as well as the highest civil authority, should be united in one person, as they had formerly been in the patriarchal families; of which the government of one person, both as priest and king, in the monarchies and empires that followed, was the representative and successor. The act which gave unlimited toleration to all the religions of the state, was thus made more effective and imperative. Maximin and Licinius were his partners in the other divisions of the empire. Maximin was a violent enemy to Christianity. Constantine, therefore, with Licinius, who at this time did not oppose him, published at Rome the first edict in favour of freedom of religious worship. This is not extant<sup>6</sup>. It was not, however, probably expressed in such unreserved language as that which followed it from Milan. Maximin received the decree with deep, yet suppressed, indignation; and published a similar rescript through his division of the empire. He permits arguments and persuasion only to be now used to recover Christians to paganism. He prohibits all persons from molesting them, and grants liberty of reasoning and of conscience to all<sup>7</sup>. His withholding from them the permission, which Constantine had granted, of assembling publicly for worship and building churches, rendered them still jealous of his sincerity. Maximin—and this was a great advance towards the total overthrow of persecution—permitted only that they should not be personally injured for their Christianity.

At length, however, between the publication of the decree at Rome, in 312, and the month of March, 313, the marriage of Licinius with his sister Constantia, and the death of Diocletian<sup>8</sup>, who, though he had long been powerless in his gardens at Salona, might possibly have been restored to power, as the ancient enemy and persecutor of the Christians; confirmed Constantine in the empire. I believe the necessity of caution, and adherence to a prudent policy,

<sup>6</sup> See Pagi, A.D. 314, § 9.

<sup>7</sup> This was in the year 313. See Euseb. H. E. x. 5, and the notes of Valesius upon the Epistle.

<sup>8</sup> That Diocletian died in the year 313, and not in 316, as had been supposed by many, is established by Pagi, A.D. 316, § 3.

which he combined with his efforts to promote Christianity, made him hesitate so long before he published the glorious Magna Charta of religious freedom at Milan. These two circumstances would have justified him in adopting the bolder measure. He accordingly did so in conjunction with Licinius, of whom it is difficult to say whether he was a Christian or a pagan<sup>9</sup>; but who probably was as ignorant of this himself as the enquirers into his conduct, and who was now certainly willing to oblige Constantine. He prepared and published the celebrated decree of Milan, in which he gives to the Christians entire, absolute, unlimited freedom to exercise their public worship. He cancels all the restrictions of former edicts upon their present liberty. He commands their churches to be restored to them, and promises that he will defray the charges of their reconveyance and all other expenses. It did more than all this; it conferred free and absolute permission to all, without exception, by whatever name they might be called, to follow any religion, or any form of worship, according to *their will*, (the word *conscience* does not occur in the decree,) and to practise the rites of their chosen religion without any molestation or interruption from the magistracy or the emperors. Two reasons are assigned for this indulgence. One is, the promoting the peace and happiness of the empire; and Christians have always prayed for the peace of the city wherein they dwell. The other is, the hope of pleasing the Deity, whatever his power may be, to whose worshippers the freedom of religion is thus granted. The practices of the heathens in their temples were necessarily suppressed some years after, in spite of this edict, in consequence of their scandalous immorality; and the sternest lover of civil and religious liberty would justify the overthrow of the public abominations, and the cruel sacrifices which still resisted the influence of our holier faith<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> It has been controverted whether Licinius ever was a Christian. Cardinal Nois takes the negative; Pagi and Basnage take the affirmative. The truth of the case seems to have been, that he pretended for some time to be a Christian, but never was so; and that, finding the Christians to be much more fond of Constantine than of himself,

he threw off the mask.—See Basnage, Ann. ii. 447; Pagi, A.D. 318, § 9.

<sup>1</sup> I subjoin some extracts from the edict, to show its universality and extent. The original, or, more properly, the first edict of toleration, by Constantine and Licinius, was published at Rome. It is lost. This of Milan is given by Cæcilius Lactantius in the

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It must, however, be regarded as a remarkable circumstance, that the name of Christ is nowhere, throughout, expressly mentioned. An impartial reader of the decree, who was unacquainted with the controversy respecting the religion and the sincerity of Constantine, would probably believe, that the only reasons for its promulgation were assigned—the desire to preserve the public peace; and to propitiate the God whom a powerful section of the best subjects of the empire had worshipped. Gibbon has not been contented with this view of the case. The manner in which the edict of Milan is drawn up, has led him to infer that one of these three things must be concluded respecting Constantine—either that he wavered between paganism and Christianity; or, that he believed the God of the Christians to be one God of many; and the third, that he embraced what the infidel historian absurdly calls “the philosophic and pleasing idea,” that notwithstanding the variety of names, rites, and opinions, all the sects and nations of mankind are united in the worship of the common Father and Creator of the universe; or, in other words, that Constantine was a Deist, who believed, either that there was no such thing as truth in religion, or, that even if it were so, truth and error are the same to the Deity. The poor blinded

treatise, “*De Mortibus Persecutorum*,” as Gibbon mentions. The extracts I have made are from the copy in Baronius. There is some obscurity in the version into Greek made or adopted by Eusebius, as has been remarked by Valesius.

Cum jampridem religionis libertatem nemini denegandam esse, sed cujusque menti et voluntati potestatem permittendam ritus et instituta divina pro sua animi voluntate et arbitrio excolendi considerarem; mandatum dedimus, ut cum singuli alii, tum Christiani, suae sectae et religionis fidem integre observarent.

tum Christianis, tum aliis omnibus, liberam optionem omnino darem, eam religionem sequendi, quam ipsi in animos inducerent; quo, quaecumque sit divinitatis et coelestis numinis potentia, nobis ac universis, qui sub nostra ditione vitam degunt, clemens et propitia esse posset.

— significare decrevimus, nos

liberam ac solutam Christianis facultatem concessisse, suam ipsorum religionem sedulo excolendi; aliisque etiam potestatem factam eum observantiae et religionis modum, quem apud animum proposuerint, consecrandi.

— ut quisque facultatem habeat deligendi observandique eam in Deo colendo rationem, quae sibi maxime placuerit.—Baronius, *A.D.* 313, § 5.

I do not understand Gibbon's note on this point. He speaks of a perpetual edict, referring to provisional regulations.

Constantine, in the edict of Milan, guarded the tranquillity of the faithful by regulations which are framed on the principles of enlarged and equal toleration. The two emperors proclaim to the world that they have granted a free and absolute power to the Christians, and to all others, of following the religion which each individual thinks proper to prefer.—Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 184.

professor of an irrational, because unchristian, philosophy did not understand that God wills the happiness of his creatures; that truth leads to higher happiness, and falsehood to an inferior happiness, which to an intellectual and spiritual mind constitutes real misery; for a Christian would be miserable in living the life which a heathen deity would encourage and sanction. Gibbon, like all his drivelling followers, sees nothing in Christianity but the dust of controversies, or a routine of unattractive duties. He cannot understand it in its only truly noble character—as the foundation of intellectual felicity; the anticipator, as well as revealer of immortality; as the purifier of the spirit from all its inferiorities, by imbuing it with love of the Highest. He could not see—none of the smooth-tongued elevators of a sin-justifying philosophy can see—that God has discovered truth to man in one true religion, because man could not discover it by the efforts of his own spirit; and that man is engaged in a constant effort to reject that truth; because he makes a wrong choice of good, and prefers misery, and calls it happiness.

Religion, prudence, policy, consistency, all alike demanded of Constantine, that he should observe unviolated the edict of Milan. Yet the remark of our infidel historian is true; that “the privilege of choosing and professing his own religion, which the edict of Milan had confirmed to each individual of the Roman world, was soon violated. The sects which dissented from the Catholic Church were soon oppressed<sup>2</sup>.” This remark is made in the spirit of those who would affirm, or insinuate, that every attempt on the part of the state to uphold and maintain religion must necessarily be the source of persecution to some portion of its subjects. No error is so prevalent, and none so much encouraged, as the popular notion that the persecution of Christian by Christian was the unavoidable result of the protection of the Catholic Church by the imperial ruler; and that the union of the Church and state is the sole cause of jealousy and hatred among Christians. If emperors, and rulers, and kings and queens, and nobles, and senates, are, like the people whom they govern, sinful, mortal, dying, and accountable;

<sup>2</sup> See Gibbon, iii. 271, edit. 4to, Lond. 1773.

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they might be expected to take measures to recommend religion to their subjects, that they might extend to others the same blessings of which they hope to partake themselves. If the duty of extending religion be put upon the inferior and more unworthy foundation of human policy only, it is no less their duty, for the benefit of the community, to establish the public morality upon the basis of religion. I would ask the meanest beggar who may believe that there is a God or a providence; whether if he were elevated to a throne, he would not endeavour to serve God on that throne; and whether if he had deemed it his duty in his poverty and sorrow to bid his fellow-sufferer be of good cheer, because there was another and a better state—he ought to be less inclined to point his fellow-immortal to God in his prosperity than he had previously been in his adversity? Are the wearers of coronets and robes of gold and purple less sinful, mortal, or suffering, than the wearers of rags? If it be our duty to tell the poor that there is a better world, is it not equally our duty to tell the rich also? And are we guilty of persecution because the persons to whom we have made one equal appeal, quarrel among themselves; and we endeavour to prevent that quarrel from disturbing the peace of our dominions by using every effort in our power to reconcile them; and while we never restrain argument, we still punish the crimes and murders which result from increasing dissension? This was the conduct of the first Christian emperor; and he who would understand his laws must place himself in the same circumstances, and then decide whether the guilt of persecution is to be imputable to the Christian prince or to the Christian subject; when he reads the undoubted fact—that the edict of Milan was broken; and that laws to punish religionists succeeded to unlimited toleration. If it shall be found that, on the part of the emperor, there was unabated patience, courtesy, and anxiety, to preserve the public peace and maintain his tolerant edict; while, on the part of certain of his subjects, there was the most needless, useless, and unjustifiable abuse of their new liberty, which showed itself in murder, rebellion, and crime; we shall throw the blame of their violation of the charter of liberty on the schismatic, and not on the magistrate; and call the laws which restrain

crime, punishment, and not persecution? The conduct of the Donatists, the first violaters of the unity of the Church after the accession of Constantine, was the origin of the persecution of Christian by Christian. Donatus was the first Christian of whom we read, that he called a number of Christians "my party;" that he excited rebellion against the civil power, because it refused to sanction his pretensions to exclusive authority in the government of the churches in his district. He changed his liberty into caprice; and brought odium upon freedom itself, by his insults upon the forbearance of authority.

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The Council of Carthage<sup>3</sup>, which was held in the primacy of Cyprian over that city and its dependent districts, had enacted severe laws against all who fell from their stedfastness in the time of persecution; especially against ecclesiastics. The several Churches of Christ maintained a just and salutary jealousy over their ministers. They required them to be firm in resolution, as well as holy in life. They believed that deficiency in the virtues of the priesthood cancelled the exercise of the commission which had been granted by ordination; and also, that the authority of a bishop to ordain ceased with his apostasy, or upon his lapsing in the time of danger. Three years prior to the accession of Constantine to the empire (A.D. 303), Diocletian published an edict<sup>4</sup>, that the Christian churches should be levelled to the ground, the ornaments seized, and the copies of the Scriptures, which were preserved in them to be read to the congregations, given up and destroyed. Those who obeyed this command were called *Traditores*<sup>5</sup>; they were considered infamous, and were not restored to the communion of the Church upon their repentance, without a long and austere penance. Those in orders were to be deposed. Mensurius, the Bishop of Carthage, had abstracted the Scriptures from the Church, and substituted for them writings of no value. Secundus was at this time Bishop of Nisibis, in Numidia, and primate of that district which joined the see of Carthage. Mensurius

<sup>3</sup> See Pearson's *Annal. Cypr.* A. D. 251, § 5; 252, § 7.

<sup>4</sup> See Lactant. *de Mortib. Persecutorum*, cap. xiii., and the notes of Baluz, p. 28; Euseb. *H. E.* viii. 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Bingham, book xvi. chap. vi. § 25, and two dissertations of Alb. Fricius *de Traditoribus*, Lips. 1737, 1738.

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informed Secundus of his evasion of the imperial decree. Secundus, in reply to his letter, declared that he ought to have submitted to any extremity of suffering rather than have acted in this manner, and he boasts of his own superior fortitude and resolution. The result, however, proved that his boasting was premature, for he became a "traditor" himself; and was absolved for his offence by the bishops who met in A.D. 305, or 306, in the Council of Cirta. At that council many bishops were found guilty of the same crime, and they mutually confessed, and pardoned, and absolved each other. They did not acknowledge their ordination to be void. The heads of the subsequently formed Donatist party were present, none of whom, after their mutual accusations and mutual absolutions, affirmed that they had ceased to be bishops of the Church of Christ. Immediately after their accepting pardon from each other, they ordained Silvanus to be Bishop of Cirta, and separated. The acts of the council are to be found in the third book of Augustine against Cresconius<sup>6</sup>.

At this time Cæcilianus was deacon, or chief of the deacons, in the city of Carthage. He was accused of behaving with cruelty to the Christians who were confined in the prisons under the persecuting imperial edicts. It was an improbable charge, alleged against him by the Donatists in the course of the ensuing controversy.

There was also at Carthage a Christian lady, named Lucilla, who was reprovèd by Cæcilianus for superstition in retaining and kissing, before she proceeded to the eucharist, the bones of a certain person whom she called a martyr<sup>7</sup>. Lucilla was indignant at the reproof; and her anger appeared as one cause of the ensuing commotion.

<sup>6</sup> The Council of Cirta, or Cytra, is assigned by Selvagio and other writers to the year 305. Long, however, in his History of the Donatists, makes it take place after the death of Mensurius. The original account in Optatus justifies the usual date.

<sup>7</sup> Ante Eucharistie usum ossa aliqujus martyris, si modo martyris, de osculari solebat.—Mr. Butler does not condemn Lucilla for kissing the bones, but for doing so when he had not been acknowledged to have been a martyr by the pastors of the Church. To prevent

abuses and superstition, it was always, he says, a necessary law in the Church, that without the bishop's approbation no private persons should be allowed to pay to relics the honour due to martyrs. This might prevent superstition when it was independent of priestcraft, but how must it increase it when sanctioned by priestcraft! The plant might not grow in the open air, it would, indeed, soon have perished there; it must only grow in the hot-house of the bishop's approbation.

A certain deacon, Felix of Aramytum, was reported to have written a libel against the emperor<sup>8</sup>. Felix took refuge from the officers who pursued him in the house of Mensurius<sup>9</sup>. He refused to surrender him and was consequently himself summoned to appear before the tribunal. Before he left Carthage he committed the charge of the gold and silver vessels of the Church to two of the senior members of his congregation. He left the inventory with another, as an additional precaution for their safety, and set out on his journey. He died on his way when returning to Carthage. Maxentius had published his decree at this time, 311, which gave more liberty to the Churches in Africa. Cæcilianus, Botrus, and Celesius, were named as the principal candidates for the vacant see. Botrus and Celesius summoned the neighbouring bishops around the city of Carthage, without requiring the presence of those of Numidia. Cæcilianus, however, was preferred by the people, elected by the general suffrages, and consecrated to the office of bishop by Felix, Bishop of Aptungis. There appears to have been some haste in completing the ceremony of his ordination; for though the Church considered ordination by one bishop to be sufficiently valid<sup>1</sup> to preserve the succession, yet it was

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<sup>8</sup> I say the emperor, for I cannot ascertain which emperor it was. Another of the persecuting edicts was published about this time by one of the rulers who had influence in Africa. F. Balduinus believes it was Maxentius. Pagi, in his notes on Baronius, endeavours to prove it was Alexander.

<sup>9</sup> It is observable, says Long, in his *History of the Donatists*, p. 2, that *episcoporum domus ne in persecutionibus fas erat violare*. The very heathen accounted their houses to be a sanctuary.

<sup>1</sup> It is true that Cæcilian was only a deacon when he was elected, but the higher degree included the lesser. Athanasius was but a deacon when he was elected Bishop of Alexandria; and that there were many presbyters already there, we know from the signatures to various deeds at the Council of Nice. Agapetus, Vigilius, and Felix, were but deacons when they were made bishops of Rome. Eusebius, a deacon of Alexandria, was made

Bishop of Laodicea. It was not, indeed, an uncommon practice. They were, indeed, sometimes chosen from the inferior orders, and even from the laity.—See the references in Bingham, book ii. chap. x. § 5.

The ordination of a bishop by three bishops was the common rule and practice of the Church, yet this was not simply and absolutely essential to the essence of ordination, for the Church many times admitted the ordination of bishops who had been consecrated by one or two bishops only. Siderius, Bishop of Palæbisea, was ordained by one bishop; yet Athanasius not only allowed his ordination and confirmed it, but finding him to be an useful man, he afterwards advanced him, as Synesius says, to the metropolitanical see of Ptolemais. Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch, ordained Evagrius, his successor, without any other bishop to assist him, which, though it was done against the canon, yet Theodoret assures us, that both the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria owned Evagrius as a true

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generally usual that three, at least, should be present. In Africa, too, it was customary that the greater part of the bishops of the neighbourhood should attend. This, too, was omitted in the consecration of Cæcilian. The only objection to his appointment must rest here. The episcopal succession was continued. The election was regular. The votes were free; the ordination valid; and it became the duty, therefore, of the members of the Church, as no canonical objection could be urged against their new bishop, to accept his ministrations; and to remain united to him in the communion of the sacraments in the manner of all the Churches.

Cæcilian, immediately that he was ordained bishop, demanded from the two persons to whom Mensurius had entrusted them the gold and silver vessels of the Church, for the use of the Church, according to the inventory in his possession. It was not convenient to them to make this return; and, to screen their own delinquency, they began to call in question the validity of their bishop's ordination. They declared it to be their duty to withdraw from communion with their new pastor. Lucilla revenged the former affront she had received from Cæcilian by joining them; and Botrus and Celesius, the disappointed aspirants for the vacancy, united themselves to the faction. Their plea was, that Cæcilian had been ordained by a "traditor;" that he was not, therefore, their bishop; and that they owed him no allegiance. They make their appeal to Donatus, the Bishop of Casæ Nigræ, from whom, and from another of the same name, who afterwards became more conspicuous than this first Donatus, the schism derived its appellation; and Donatus, in conjunction with the rest, wrote to Secundus, the Bishop of Nisibis, who had been already offended with the people of Carthage for not calling upon him to confer orders upon Cæcilian. They appeal to the neighbouring bishops, whom Cæcilian had offended by objecting, on a former occasion, to their electing Silvanus to be Bishop of Cirta. Secundus, indeed, had already imbued the minds of his clergy with prejudice against Cæcilian, and nominated, also, a visitor to

bishop; and never, in the least degree, questioned the validity of his ordination.—See the references in Bingham, book ii. chap. xi. § 15.

the diocese. When they visited Carthage, they declined to pay their respects to their clerical brethren in the city; and remained at the house of Lucilla. Cæcilian continued among his friends in spite of the gathering of the storm, and performed his duty at Carthage. Secundus summoned seventy of the bishops of Numidia to attend him in that city, to meet in council; and to proceed to consider the question. Cæcilian, with his people, awaited their coming in the cathedral, the bishop's church. They assembled in a private house, and commanded Cæcilian to attend them. He refused to leave the cathedral. The people of the city, among whom he had so long lived, had elected him to be their bishop; and he well knew that no real objection could be urged against his election. He stood, therefore, upon his rights, as their canonically appointed prelate. "If I have been ordained by a traditor," he said, "let them come and ordain me themselves. I have received the approbation of the people of Carthage; let them sanction that approbation by the ordination which must give the force of authority to their will." He refused to leave the church. The people prevented him, too, from incurring the danger of going down to the assembly. The council condemned him as a person ordained by "traditors;" and as holding communion with "traditors" upon their professing repentance. They involved in the same censure those who held communion with Cæcilian. Lucilla had distributed among them four hundred purses, or more than three thousand pounds. They proceeded to elect a bishop in the place of Cæcilian; and their choice fell upon Majorinus, a reader only in the deaconry of Cæcilian, but a chaplain in the house of Lucilla. So began the first real schism in the Christian Church, when altar was opposed to altar—when the apostolical succession itself rent the seamless coat of Christ with its own suicidal hands; and bishop opposed bishop; and councils, councils; without one error in doctrine, one breach of discipline, or one wickedness in life worthy of notice being alleged to justify the alienation of the Church of Majorinus from the Churches of the empire. The schism against Cæcilian led the way to greater evils than all the persecutions of the pagan emperors. It embittered the love of the emperor to the Church at the moment when he was

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most anxious to conciliate towards Christianity the affections of his pagan subjects. The Christians had been distinguished for peace and for amiableness towards each other in the midst of their persecutions and occasional differences. Victor of Rome and other bishops had been condemned with severity, or they had censured with harshness; but now the afflicting spectacle was to be presented of Christian contending with Christian at the public tribunals, in sanguinary conflicts, and in excesses which disgraced their religion and made their enemies rejoice, or mock them. Resentment was the mother, ambition the nurse, covetousness was the champion of the schism<sup>2</sup>. Many and great were the miseries which it occasioned at the beginning; and intolerable was the eventual persecution which descended, in after-ages, upon every bold enquirer who desired to remove an incipient evil; but who was accused of schism and all its consequences, and reminded of Donatus and his brethren.

About this time the edict of Milan was published, together with some other edicts, in favour of Christianity, which are now lost. It cannot be supposed that the notions of toleration which Constantine had formed were as free from any leaven of despotism as those which are now professed, after the sorrowful experience of fifteen centuries. When the emperor granted indulgence to all his subjects to profess their own religion, he must undoubtedly have referred to the two great masses of opinion which generally divided the empire. He could not, we may believe, have understood that unlimited indulgence which is now claimed by the subjects and granted by the sovereigns of the three greatest people in the civilized world, that every individual may be his own pope; and form a sect and a Church for himself. If the partizans of a priest of Jupiter had set up a rival altar to Jupiter against the worshippers with whom they had been accustomed to pray, there can be little doubt that Constantine would have interfered to prevent the continuance of such schism; if he thought the public peace of the district likely to be broken in the contest. He was the supreme pontiff as well as emperor; and it is not probable that he

<sup>2</sup> These are the words of Optatus— *ambitio nutrit, avaritia roboravit.*  
“Confuse mulieris iracundia peperit,

would have permitted the pagans to endanger the public peace by dissensions among themselves. He was a Christian—an emperor. He could not have imagined the propriety of granting more indulgence of a political nature, in order that they might quarrel more at liberty, to his Christian subjects, than he would have granted to the pagans. We must remember the impossibility of his anticipating, at this time, the results of the history of the collisions among Christians; and acquit the first Christian emperor of intolerance when we now consider the violation of the letter of the edict of Milan<sup>3</sup>. Constantine applied it to Churches, or to religions. One of the equally-protected religions began to divide into schisms. Is the emperor to be regarded as guilty of intolerance because he did not immediately apply his edict to the sectarian dividers of the Christian Churches as well as to the Churches themselves? Can we be surprised that he hesitated to employ in his edicts the same language to those who began to disturb the infant repose of his dominions; as he adopted towards the Churches themselves, which continued at peace within themselves, and gave no trouble to the emperor?

These remarks will be found useful to us when we turn to the first interference of the civil power in the internal affairs of the Churches. We read in Baronius of three decrees of Constantine respecting the Churches in Africa. The two first are addressed to Annius Anulinus, the proconsul of Africa<sup>4</sup>, who had been one of the most intolerant persecutors under Diocletian, but who was now equally willing to enforce the more indulgent decrees of Constantine. The third was addressed to Cæcilianus as bishop. The emperor informs Anulinus, in the first letter, that he wishes the Churches, with their appendages, which had been taken from the Catholic Church of the Christians<sup>5</sup>, to be restored to them. It is not impossible that he might have heard, by this time, of the schisms in Africa; and have studiously contrasted the Catholics with their Donatist adversaries. If so, he does not yet censure the schismatics. In the second edict he exempts

<sup>3</sup> See Euseb. H. E. x. 6.

<sup>4</sup> The emperor, in his first letter, "ad catholicam Christianorum ecclesiam." calls Anulinus, 'Tua pietas,' a strange appellation for a *ci decant* pagan.

<sup>5</sup> This too is a singular expression—

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the clergy in the Catholic Church, over which Cæcilian presides, from the burthen of certain public tributes. It is probable that the definiteness of this expression was intended to exclude the schismatics from participating in the same benefit. This, however, was not persecution. In the letter to Cæcilianus, he uses other language, implying the probable necessity of appealing to the magistrates if there were any disturbance in the Church of Africa. He sends about five thousand pounds to Cæcilian to defray the expenses of the ministers of the lawful and most holy Catholic religion<sup>6</sup>; an expression which was possibly contrived to exclude the framers of the incipient schism. He begs Cæcilian to distribute the money according to the list which Hosius (the favourite ecclesiastic of the emperor, Bishop of Corduba, in Spain, and afterwards president of the Council of Nice) would give to him. He then goes on to take the first notice, of which we read in history, by which the civil power interferes with the schisms of the Church. "I have been informed," he says, "that many are desirous to corrupt the members of the holy and Catholic Church. I have charged Anulinus to correct this evil. If you find that the persons to whom I allude persevere in their folly, apply instantly to the judges<sup>7</sup>." Who these judges were, and what were their powers, and whether they were authorized to interfere in the dispute between Cæcilian and his opponents, does not appear. The object of Constantine was to preserve peace. He might imagine that this object would be promoted by reminding both parties of his power. He does not appear to have exercised any severity against them. As they had thrown off the name of Catholic, and that name was so studiously used in the edicts of the emperor, they were excluded from his bounty, and this omission excited their jealousy. They loudly clamoured against Cæcilian; but Anulinus obeyed his instructions, distributed the money, and exhorted all the clergy of Carthage, with Cæcilianus, to unite in all obedience to the law, and reverence to the Deity.

Now began that series of appeals, on the part of the Donatists, which so repeatedly elicited the decisions of the

<sup>6</sup> τῶν ὑπηρετῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἀγιωτάτης καθολικῆς θρησκείας. — <sup>7</sup> See the passage in Euseb. H. E. x. 6.  
Euseb. H. E. x. 6.

Churches and of the emperor against their cause. Dissatisfied with the censure implied in the letters of Constantine, and stung by his excluding them from any participation in his bounty; they behaved with such unpardonable bitterness of spirit against Cæcilian and the Catholics, that the common cause of Christianity began to be desecrated before the whole empire. The theory of their theology,—if that honourable word may be used to describe their erroneous opinions,—was this, that as Cæcilian had been ordained by a traditor, he was not a bishop; that as Majorinus had been consecrated in the place of Cæcilian by bishops who had authority to consecrate him to that office, he was the true Bishop of Carthage; that those who adhered to Cæcilian, having no bishop, were out of the communion of the Church, and had no true sacraments; and as the Churches in other parts of the world held communion with Cæcilian, they also were out of the pale of the Church; they had no true sacraments, and the Catholic Church was consequently centred in their own small body of Churches and congregations in the plains of Africa. They unchurched all the Churches of the empire, and applying to themselves the passages of Scripture which declare the Church of Christ to be a small flock, they affirmed themselves to be that flock; and that the torrid wastes of Africa were the place at which that flock was to rest at noon. The “Circumcelliones,” in whom they gradually merged, were not known, it is true, till the year 347. These must have been insane, in their folly of imploring death as martyrs on the high roads, to prove their spiritual devotedness; but Africa was convulsed at a much earlier period with their disgraceful fanaticism<sup>8</sup>. Private meetings of Christians had set themselves up for the first time against the communion of the Churches, and preached the doctrine, that the Church of Christ consists only of the holy, the pure, and the spotless; and that such were only to be found among the separated congregations, where were better ministers, and purer ordinances. I protest I am not describing the practices of later sectarians under the mask of relating the conduct of the Donatists; but am almost transcribing from the historian the transactions

<sup>8</sup> I have before me Long's summary, *History of the Donatists*, p. 11, edit. 8vo, from Optatus and St. Augustine, *His-* Lond. 1677.

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I am relating. The men run from house to house, and from village to village. They pity the people. They unite to their congregations one or two of a family, or two or three of a village, by insinuations or accusations against others. They persuade the people that the Christians who remain in communion with Cæcilian, (against whom, let it be still remembered, they allege no crime, nor one false doctrine,) were the same as idolaters, and that they were defiled by holding communion with them. They addressed the members of the Church of Carthage—"As yet are you pagan: consult the good of your soul: be Christian." Division among families; separation of wives from husbands, and of husbands from wives, of parents, friends, and children from each other, when neither the salvation of the soul, nor the honour of God, could by any possibility require it, were the results of such preaching. All was confusion and vexation. The religion of peace and holiness became the Babel of war; and the bitterness of exasperated hatred. The very liberty of conscience, by which a man must judge the truth or falsehood of the doctrines submitted to him by authority, became a curse by its perversion; and whatever apology may be made for them by the candour or liberality of the present age, as being sincere in their error, it was impossible but that Constantine would impute their proceeding to disappointed ambition, or to some other inferior and indefensible motive. Whatever might have been his opinion, his moderation and temper in his endeavours to restore peace, and to produce a change of conduct among the Donatists by listening with patience, courtesy, and respect to all their complaints, must have excited the wonder and admiration of the pagans; and ought to have subdued the fierce intractableness of the disturbers of Cæcilian and the Churches.

The first appeal which the Donatists made to the emperor to induce him to acknowledge Majorinus as Bishop of Carthage, was a petition that the bishops of Gaul might be required to consider the whole matter, and to report thereupon to the emperor. The bishops of Gaul were undoubtedly the best tribunal to which they could apply, because they had been so protected during the government of Constantius and Constantine, that they had escaped the persecutions; and no suspected traditors could, consequently, be found

among them. They presented two petitions, one sealed, entitled, the Petition of the Catholic Church, containing the crimes of Cæcilian; the other open, in which they requested to be heard before the bishops of Gaul. Constantine complied with their prayer. He directed Maternus, Reticus, and Marinus, bishops of Gaul, to proceed to Rome to hear the cause in conjunction with Miltiades, the bishop of that always influential see, and with an ecclesiastic of the name of Mark<sup>9</sup>. He commanded Anulinus to order Cæcilianus and his opponents to appear at Rome in October, 313; and that ten bishops should be present on each side. The whole proceedings of all the appeals are related by Baronius. Fifteen Italian bishops were added to those from Gaul. The appeal was solemnly heard. Three days were devoted to its consideration. The council decided that Donatus was wrong in rebaptizing, which he confessed to have uniformly done; and in laying on of hands upon the bishops who had lapsed, as if to reconsecrate them, instead of readmitting them by penance. They declare Cæcilian to be Bishop of Carthage; but they passed no sentence of excommunication against any other bishop. All were to be left in their sees, if they would again unite with Cæcilian. The sentence was mild, yet just, for in this lamentable schism no party had hitherto objected to the doctrines taught by the other; and both parties professed to be jealous for the proper discipline of the Church, and for the maintenance of the episcopal succession. The one object of the emperor and of the council was unity. They decided, therefore, for the sake of unity, that in the cities where there were two bishops, he who was first ordained there, on whichever side he might be, should there continue. The council was dissolved, and two representatives were sent into Africa to announce the decision of the council, as that of the Church of Christ. These were bishops, and they remained forty days in Africa, endeavouring to reconcile the contending parties, and to restore peace.

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<sup>9</sup> Baronius, A.D. 313, § 23, supposes that the name Mark is an error. Instead of Μάρκος, he would read ιεράρχης, or sacred magistrate, an inadmissible epithet, which he would represent Constantine as bestowing on the Bishop of Rome. See also Valesius, ad Euseb.

H. E. x. 5, ed. Heinrich. iii. 257. The rescript, and the profession of attachment it contains by Constantine "to the legitimate Catholic Church," are given in Eusebius. Optatus Milevitanus gives the names of the persons who composed this tribunal.

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Here we might naturally have supposed that the schism would have terminated. Here it ought to have ended. The tribunal was, in one sense, selected by Donatus himself. No one false doctrine—let it be again and again remembered—was alleged against Cæcilian. He had now been approved by his brethren, as he had been before rightly elected, consecrated, and confirmed by the approbation of the emperor. What, however, was his conduct? Both Cæcilian and himself are detained from Africa by the emperor, while the representatives from the Council of Rome proceed thither to pacify the people. Donatus makes his escape to return more privately to encourage his followers. Cæcilian deems it to be his duty to be at his post when the enmity against him is to be renewed; and the whole dispute is revived with bitterness, increased to madness by its temporary suspension.

The apology which Donatus now made for still proceeding with his painful schism, was the complaint—that the cause was not fully examined at Rome<sup>1</sup>. They demand that Felix, the Bishop of Aptungis, be examined on the charges alleged against him. This request, too, was met with compliance. The question was considered before Ælian, the proconsul of Africa. He also with his assessors decides against Donatus. Not yet satisfied, a larger council is called at Arles, which was collected from all quarters, not excepting Britain. Marinus, the Bishop of Arles, presided<sup>2</sup>. The decision of this council was against them; and here, also, was an opportunity presented for terminating the schism. Some of the Donatists, indeed, did conform; those who did not, were made subject to the sentence of excommunication—the sentence which they had long since passed upon their brethren. The heads of the party were not yet satisfied. They had another resource. They appealed to the emperor in person. Constantine heard the whole cause over again at Milan, after many interruptions, delays, and difficulties, during which he was highly praised and flattered by the Donatists. He had declared before this, that if Cæcilian could be found guilty of one charge which they had laid

<sup>1</sup> This is the representation of both Valesius and Du Pin.

<sup>2</sup> The number of bishops of this council is variously estimated at thirty-

three, the general number. Two hundred according to Baronius.—See the note in Du Pin, 4th cent. p. 247, and Pagi ad Baron. A.D. 314, § 22.

against him, he should be deemed guilty of all. They could prove none. The Bishop of Carthage was again acquitted, and the guilt of needless, useless separation from the Church still rested with the Donatists. The former decrees of synods, bishops, Churches, and magistrates, were solemnly and deliberately confirmed. Both parties, however, with some exceptions, were honourably dismissed; and the charges of both for their return to Africa were equally defrayed<sup>3</sup>.

It must not be denied, however, that the emperor was exceedingly vexed and harassed by all these proceedings in the bosom of the Church of which he had so lately become the avowed patron. The pagans, to his exceeding grief, derided, as the infidel party among mankind always must be expected to do, the dissensions among Christians. They afford the most common argument for unbelief and indifference, for careless contempt, and neglect of enquiry into evidence. Though some of the more refractory were imprisoned, contrary to our present notions of religious liberty, they were treated with a leniency which had never been known to his predecessors, (who had been accustomed to regard the will of the prince as the criterion of truth,) and to few of his followers either on the imperial, or, in a still later age, on the papal throne. He gave every proof that he desired peace at all hazards. The world saw with astonishment the manner in which a prince of violent resentments, and originally of cruel disposition, could submit to the provocations he received, when the Donatists returned into Africa after the breaking up of these various councils; and after his own personal decision of the quarrel. Instead of, at length, submitting to the verdicts so frequently pronounced against them, their frantic mobs attacked the very church which Constantine had built at Constantia. The anti-Donatists, if that word may be used to describe the more quiet Christians of the province, instead of resisting aggression with tumult, applied to Constantine for another church. The emperor still refusing to be angry, thanks them for not taking revenge upon the ungrateful and irreligious partizans who had insulted them; and reproaches the Donatists, as the pretended lovers of truth and superior profession, with their

<sup>3</sup> See Pagi, A.D. 316, § 15, seqq.

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inconsistency and turbulence. He orders another church to be built for them at the public expense; and writes to Celsus, the governor of Africa, to assure him that he will visit the province, and punish the enemies of his authority. He was prevented from so doing. The insults and boldness of the Donatists were increased. They accused the emperor of passing an unjust sentence; and despised his power in proportion to his lenity, which had now been indulged even to weakness. His whole passion and desire, as he assured the bishops of Africa, was to secure the peace of the Church; and as he found he could not effect this, he must wait till God afforded a remedy for their divisions<sup>4</sup>. The death of Majorinus, too, which yielded, after all these discussions and disputes, an admirable opportunity once more for terminating the schism, instead of being regarded in this light, became the source of fresh dissension; and a leader of the name of Donatus was elected, whose pride and vehemence redoubled and aggravated every grievance. Having exhausted every effort to restore peace, by patience and compliance, Constantine had now recourse to punishment. He did not condemn the rebels to death, as both his predecessors and successors would have done. He avoided as much as possible the shedding of blood; and was satisfied with condemning some of the more active spirits to banishment. He exiled them not for their religious opinions, but for their utterly indefensible political conduct. From this banishment he permitted them to return at the end of four years. The sentence became the signal for the most savage and outrageous excesses. The base, the wicked, the cruel, and the fanatical, assuming the name of leaders of the saints, pleaded the dictates of conscience to justify every crime. The safety of the whole province was endangered; and the indulgent and placable emperor was requested by the governors of Africa to recall the exiles, and thus to stop the fury of the insolent and factious populace. For the first time in the history of the Church the name of religion was used as an apology for open and intolerable crime. To have inflicted the utmost punishment

<sup>4</sup> See the list of edicts, letters, &c. of Constantine, collected by Du Pin, 4th cent. i. 12; ii. 15. The letter to the bishops of Africa, to which re-

ference is here made, is to be found at the end of the work of Optatus, ap. Galland, *Bibl. Patr.* v. 545.

upon the people who thus made religious dissension an excuse for dissolving society, could not have been called persecution. If the emperor, when the Donatists had made their first request for his interference, had either refused compliance, and commanded them to settle their disputes among themselves; or, if he had said, I will permit each party to choose the bishop it pleases, but I will punish the disturber of the public peace, he might possibly have prevented the evil. Having once interfered, though at their own request, he must have remembered the authority of the ancient law; and have deemed himself as worthy of obedience in religious matters as his predecessors. He was evidently influenced by the fear of being reckoned among the persecutors; and the provinces of Africa were harassed by that strange mixture of rude enthusiasm, abandoned licentiousness, religious profession, and fearful cruelty, which subsequently characterized the Donatists. These evils, it is true, did not fully appear till after the Council of Nice; but the wounds of insulted authority, pagan ridicule, and schismatical rebellion, must have deeply rankled in the imperial bosom; and the history of the Donatist dissensions, originating in a question of Church discipline, without reference to the loftier principles upon which still more vehement dissensions might probably have arisen; seems to me to be the real cause of the subsequent anxiety of Constantine to suppress similar miseries on the mighty controversy between Arius and the Church. It is the one great explanation of the singular discrepancy between the unlimited toleration of the edict of Milan, and the unjustifiable severity which followed the Council of Nice.

Justice to Constantine demands that this matter should be clearly understood. It must never be forgotten by those who are willing, with a strange ignorance of the facts from which philosophical inferences should be drawn, to impute all the corruptions of Christianity to the encouragement afforded to religion by the ruler of the state; that the Christians who committed the greatest evils which have debased their holy profession, were but lately emancipated from the fear of persecution; and enjoyed to the utmost, the ample protection of the law, toleration of every opinion, and perfect equality with their late oppressors. The first use which

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many of them made of their newly acquired privileges, was to convulse the empire and insult their indulgent sovereign by the most useless, needless quarrel, on a more minute point of discipline than has ever yet afforded a pretence for theological hatred. Let it be remembered, that they themselves appealed to the authorities which they then only insulted, opposed, and despised; and let us all lay this lesson to heart—that the magistrate of every country, whether he be a Christian or a heathen, is required to prevent every crime, even those which result from the perversion of religious zeal. Such prevention is not persecution. While he grants toleration as a common right, and avoids persecution as a common curse; neither the love of toleration, nor the dread of the word persecution, should cause him to permit the outbreking, the increase, and the triumph of violence and factious excess. Opinions themselves are only sacred when they are harmless, or speculative, or religious, or uninjurious to the people or the state; and the magistrate who would presume to punish such opinions bears the sword in vain. The error of Constantine after the Council of Nice was, indeed, a fatal error. It was the foundation of all the sad train of severe and sanguinary enactments, by which an ignorant magistracy conveyed its power to a corrupt hierarchy, to pervert Christianity itself, the best blessing of Almighty God, into an evil and a curse: but Constantine was anxious to preserve peace, to tolerate all men, to establish truth, and to benefit the great empire which he governed. He committed unintentionally, for he could not foresee the painful results of his policy, an error in making the decrees of the synods the compulsory law of the people; but he desired to prevent the renewal of the scenes which had disturbed and harassed the provinces when the decisions of such councils had not the force of law; and he is entitled to the benefit of this apology for his erroneous, but well-meant policy. His defence is founded on the crimes of Christians before the public law had presumed to interfere with their faith; when all that a Christian people knew of a Christian magistrate was his boundless indulgence, and the suppression of pagan persecutions; and when all they had heard or seen of the laws he had enacted was universal, unlimited toleration.

The protection of Christianity by Constantine occasioned

great anger among the Jews, who were still numerous and powerful in the empire. It is not improbable that many of their number took opportunity at this time—that is, soon after the edict of Milan—to forsake Judaism and embrace the religion of the emperor. It was their custom when any persons quitted their religion to stone them, or to cast them into the fire<sup>5</sup>. I have no doubt, though I cannot produce demonstrative evidence of the fact, that many of the Jews were guilty of such conduct about this period. It is otherwise impossible to acquit Constantine of the charge of cruelty and persecution. Retaliation, under these circumstances, would have been justifiable. An original law consigning Jews to the flames for attacking their brethren with stones because they forsook Judaism, and that, too, with all their aiders and abettors, would have been intolerable. Such a law was passed in the year 315<sup>6</sup>. It is so worded as to imply that the Jews had committed great outrages upon those that forsook Judaism, of which stoning the proselyte was one. It describes the other outrages in general terms only. As the committing the convert to Christianity to the flames was an usual custom

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<sup>5</sup> This horrible punishment of *vivibomburatio* is one of the oldest tortures on record, and has been continued till the year 1826, when a heretic was burned in Spain. The first fatal instance of its use among Christians was under Constantine. Simancha defends the infliction of this punishment on heretics, from the parable of the tares and wheat. De Cathol. Inst. tit. xlv. § 46. It was used among the patriarchs as the punishment of unchastity, Gen. xxxviii. 24; and among the Jews for the same offence in a priest's daughter, Lev. xxi. 9; and for incest, Lev. xx. 14. The Philistines punished treason in the same manner, Judg. xv. 6. The Romans adopted it. This frightful punishment, which we may trust is at length exploded from the sanction of the laws of civilized nations, was too frequently commanded by Constantine. It had been the most common mode of torture among his persecuting predecessors. It seems to have been the favourite penalty with many of his successors. It was the *ultima ratio* of the Church of Rome, which borrowed it, in common with the laws against heresy and heretics, from the imperial

decrees. The last time that fire was applied as a punishment, was in the exercise of the Lynch law in America. May it never be known again, even in the moral deserts of the West.

<sup>6</sup> I subjoin the whole law. It is not so long as the preamble to a modern Act of Parliament. "Judæis, et majoribus eorum, et patriarchis, volumus intimari, quod, si qui, post hanc legem, aliquem, qui eorum feralem fugerit sectam, et ad Dei cultum respexerit, saxis aut alio genere (quod nunc fieri cognoscimus), ausus fuerit attemperare, mox flammis dedendus, et cum omnibus suis participibus concremandus. Si quis vero ex populo ad eorum nefariam sectam accesserit, et conciliabulis eorum se applicaverit, cum ipsis penas meritas sustinebit.—Dat. xv. Kalend. Nov. Murgillo, Constantino A. iv. et Licinio iv. Coss." (315).

For remarks from Basnage on the story from Chrysostom, see Jortin. Gothofred's remarks on this law of Constantine are not so satisfactory as usual.—Cod. Theod. vi. 215, edit. fol. Lugd. 1665; xvi. tit. viii.

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with them, and as this horrible enactment is the punishment now assigned to them, I am willing to believe that the law of Constantine which decreed *vivi-comburation* as the penalty to the Jews for any insult upon the proselytes from Judaism to Christianity, was decreed in the spirit of retaliation, and not of arbitrary persecution. Adrian was accustomed to cut off the ears of the Jews; and Chrysostom affirms that they assembled about this time to rebuild Jerusalem, and that Constantine, offended at their rashness, cut off their ears and sold them as slaves. There is no contemporary evidence, however, to justify us in believing this assertion of Chrysostom; neither is there any law in the Theodosian code which ordains the cutting off of the ears of the Jews. Euty-chius declares that Constantine ordered them all to be baptized, and to eat pork at Easter. Of these allegations, also, we find no evidence. There is no law to that effect. Very unfortunate has it been for the cause of toleration and humanity, that the Jews gave any occasion for the law which sentenced them to a retaliatory punishment. The penalty continued to be enforced against them, for many generations when no outrages were committed. This was the first law of a Christian prince which may be called persecuting. The first part of it, if it be indeed recriminatory, might be defensible; for the political laws of a state might be sometimes justified, when they are framed upon the principles of retaliation, which, in private life, Christianity would condemn. For the second part, which commanded the punishment of death by fire to be inflicted upon those who became converted to Judaism, it is difficult to form an apology. It is painful, though it is curious, to trace in this manner the origin of the laws which were afterwards framed into a code of persecution. It is evident, in spite of the edict of Milan, that Constantine did not understand toleration.

Many excellent laws were passed by Constantine between the period of the edict of Milan and the assembling of the Council of Nice. Constantine however could not yet be called a decided and uncompromising Christian, for he still consulted the haruspices if any public edifice was struck with lightning; and was guilty, also, of other adherences to pagan observances, which show him to have been either ignorant or inconsistent. He much ameliorated the public law by some

enactments founded on Christian principles. In 312 he released the clergy from burthensome municipal offices. He transferred by this law a privilege of the heathen, and of the leaders of the Jewish synagogues, to the Christian clergy<sup>7</sup>. He permitted slaves who had been hitherto manumitted in the heathen temples to be invested with their freedom in the Christian Churches. These enactments familiarized the people with the idea of substituting Christianity slowly and gradually for paganism. They were a legitimate mode of warfare infinitely superior to punishment and persecution. In 315 he abolished crucifixion, in remembrance and veneration for Him who had been crucified for mankind. In 321 he permitted legacies to be left to the Christian Churches, and in the same year decreed the great Christian law for the observance of the Lord's day. He does not, indeed, call it by that name, but by the old name, the Day of the Sun. Rest from the usual labours, and cessation from the usual amusements, or irreligious employments of the week, had ever characterized Christians on this day. It was ever with them the poor man's day, and the Lord's day. By calling it the Day of the Sun, Constantine endeavoured to please both parties in the empire. The pagans would highly approve, the Christians would not severely censure it. He prohibited the opening of the courts of law, and all labour, excepting agricultural, on that day. He permitted the

<sup>7</sup> He passed three laws to this effect, one in 312 or 313, which was addressed to Anulius, and applied only to Africa, and there to those only who had remained firm to the communion of Cæcilianus. It is given by Euseb. Eccles. Hist. x. 7, p. 487, edit. Reding. The Donatists were excluded from the benefit of the decree. The Catholics were defined to be, *ἐκείνους τοὺς εἶσω τῆς ἐπαρχίας τῆς σοὶ πεπιστευμένης ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ὃ Καικιλιανὸς ἐφίστηκε*. The second law was passed in 313; the third in 319.—See the notes in Gothofred, vi. 21, 22, edit. Lugd. 1665.

Gothofred shows the identity of the first and third law. The first, however, though mentioned by Eusebius, is not found in the Theodosian code.

See the references for all these in Giesler, and in Gothofred's notes on

the various laws in the Theodosian code, to which Giesler refers.

Constantine having assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, probably imagined, that as a pagan ruler, he was supreme over the privileges of the heathen temples; and, as a Christian prince, that he might transfer them to the ministers of his adopted religion. As emperor, he observed all the pagan usages, in spite of his attachment to Christianity.—Cod. Theod. xvi. tit. x. lex. i. with Gothofred's notes.

*ἐχρήτο δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ καὶ τοῖς πατρίοις ἱεροῖς, οὐ τιμῆς ἕνεκα μᾶλλον ἢ χρείας*, &c. says Zosimus, ap. Gothofred's notes.—Theod. Cod. vi. p. 258, col. i., a curious passage, showing that along with his professed Christianity he not only permitted but enjoined pagan superstitions.

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manumission of slaves on that day. It was an employment worthy of the Sabbath, to let the oppressed go free. He commanded the soldiers on the Sunday to attend the service of the Church if they were Christians; and if they were not, to march out into the fields, and offer a prayer in general terms to God. They were to implore the Supreme Being to continue his protection to them, to the emperor, and to his family. He would make them pure Deists, and free from idolatry, if he could not make them Christians. He probably believed that if the mind embraced the conviction that there was but one God, the Creator, it would soon conclude that the Creator was the Preserver; and that, therefore, there was a providence; and, if so, that the providence of God would be displayed by granting to the human mind some knowledge which reason alone could not obtain; and that such knowledge had only been imparted in the religion, of which Christianity was the completed form. He prohibited private divinations, as the germs of possible conspiracies. He endeavoured to suppress all magical rites, but those that were harmless; such as pretending to avert storms and tempests. He prohibited the pagans from requiring the Christians to join in the sacrifices and ceremonies which were performed for the public prosperity; under the pretence that every citizen should interest himself for the welfare of the state. He permitted suitors to bring their causes from the courts of law to be heard before the bishops<sup>a</sup>; probably

<sup>a</sup> There is a law of Constantine's extant, in the close of the *Theodosian code*, under the title, *De Episcopali Audientiâ*, wherein the emperor commands that the sentences pronounced by a bishop, even in *causis minorum*, should obtain the force of a law. The translator, therefore, has done ill, at this place, to render *ὁρως* *regulas*, *rules* or *canons*; for the discourse here is not concerning the ecclesiastical rules, which are promulged in a synod by the bishops; but concerning sentences pronounced between persons at law, as is apparent from the words which follow. Moreover, Sozomen understood these words of Eusebius no otherwise. But that which occasions the difficulty is what Eusebius has said in the following words—*ὁρως τοὺς ἐν*

*συνόδοις ἀποφανθέντας*, those decrees which were promulged in synods. But *σύνδοδος* is here used to signify an ecclesiastical session, to wit, of a bishop and his presbyters. Sozomen has the very same term in lib. i. c. ix. (p. 21, edit. Reading, fol. Cantab. 1720,) where he speaks concerning the law of Constantine, which author's words I do so much the more willingly produce, as often as the laws are treated of; because he was a person incomparably well skilled in the Roman laws, as is evident from his books. His words, therefore, in the foresaid book and chapter, are these:—*Τῶν δὲ ἐπισκόπων ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὴν κρίσιν ἐπέτρεψε τοῖς δικάζομένοις*, &c. Moreover, he permitted litigants to appeal to the judgment of the bishops, if they had a

with the view of extending the knowledge of the justice and equity of the Gospel code; as well as diminishing expense, and increasing the influence of the Christian ruler. He freed the manumission of slaves from the difficulties which had previously encumbered the ceremony, by ordering that it should be sufficient to give them their freedom in the churches, in the presence of the bishop and the people. He relieved the clergy from all public taxes. He abrogated the punishment of branding the face, and put an end, as far as he was able, to gladiatorial shows. Because celibacy was highly valued and commended by many Christians, he repealed the Papian or Poppæan law, which had punished the unmarried. The subject was left to his own decision upon this matter.

Most of these laws were great improvements. They betokened great progress. They rendered society more fused together. They gave a proof to the empire that the natural fierceness and savageness of the temper of Constantine were softened by the influence of his new faith; when the people saw him commending Christianity by the impartation of new privileges to one party, without inflicting persecution and misery on the other, as his predecessors had but too uniformly done; and if the dissensions of the Christians had permitted the imperial power to have continued, without interruption, the work of such legislation; the advantage which the world is destined to reap from the laws of a Christian magistracy, would long ago have been attained without one great portion, at least, of that mass of misery which has intervened since the accession of Constantine. We are now, however, to consider the next great event which became the precedent for twelve hundred years to the Christian Church—of that mingled collection of councils,

mind to avoid the civil magistrates; and that their (the bishops') sentence should be firm and valid, and of more force than the sentence of the other judges, as if it had been pronounced by the emperor himself; and that the governors of the provinces should put in execution the sentences pronounced (by the bishops), and that the decrees of synods should be unalterable. But

if any one will have the councils of bishops to be meant by the term *συνόδους*, then *ὅροι* will signify the sentences pronounced in a synod against mischievous priests and heretics; which sentences the emperors do confirm in the second law, in the same title, *De Episcopali Audientiâ*.—Eusebius's Life of Constantine, p. 615, c. 2, Cambridge, 1683.

BOOK II. canons, edicts, denunciations of opinions and their maintainers,  
CHAP. III. which has been productive of much good, and of much  
more evil to the world—which terminated in the establishment of the earthly omnipotence of the Church of Rome; and which must all undergo revision, and be almost wholly rejected, before the religion of peace can give peace to the Christian Church.

## CHAPTER IV.

*On the Meeting of the Council of Nice, and the result of its deliberations.*

SUCH were the first laws of Constantine against schism, in the affair of the Donatists, and against the ancient enemy of the Christians—the Jews. We are now to consider the laws of Constantine against heresy, in the case of Arius and his followers. We will review, as briefly as possible, the origin of the disputes between Arius and his opponents; the calling of the Council of Nice; its meeting; and the result of its deliberations. BOOK II.  
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Constantine, on coming to the supreme authority in A.D. 306, had issued his first edicts in favour of Christianity. He had subsequently assumed the power as well as the title of Pontifex Maximus, and thereby he became the ecclesiastical head of his pagan subjects. He considered himself the common head, or bishop, in political matters, and in all questions concerning the public peace of the empire, as the head of the Christian Church. He told his bishops that they were bishops within, of things appertaining to the Church. “I,” said he, “am appointed by God to be the bishop over the things without, appertaining to the Church.” He left to them the administration of the word and sacraments. He assumed to himself the protection and defence both of doctrine and discipline against the heretic and schismatic, together with the punishment of the open enemy and assailant<sup>1</sup>. He acted on these principles when the empire,

<sup>1</sup> The passage in which Constantine claims this power is found in an address to the bishops. ὑμῖς μὲν τῶν εἰσωτῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ Θεοῦ καθισταμένους ἐπίσκοπος ἀν εἶην—vos episcopi circa interiora ecclesiæ (doctrinam et sacramenta), ego circa ecclesiæ externa (regimen et tutamen) episcopus a Deo sum constitutus.—Euseb. de Vit. Const. lib. iv. c. 24; and

in iv. 37, he calls himself κοινὸς ἐπίσκοπος, the common bishop of the Church.

In the same manner Socrates (Hist. lib. v. præf.) remarks, that from the time when the emperor began to be Christian, the affairs of the Church depended upon their government, that is, the outward affairs of the Church—all those things which pertain to the

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which had already been much agitated with the schism of the Donatists, began to be again shaken with the heresy of the Arians. As the chief magistrate over religion, whether Christian or pagan, he summoned that council which has influenced, more than any similar assembly, the faith, the laws, and manners of the whole Christian world. The Creed of Nice, as the embodied substance of the ancient faith of the Church, has been more extensively received than any other. The assembling of this council was the great precedent for calling together the larger councils, the reception or rejection of whose decrees have ever been one source of division or union among Christians; while the enactments of emperors, that the canons of councils should be recognized as part of the civil law of the empire, constituted new crimes, erected new tribunals, changed man into a demon towards his fellow man, gradually checked the energy of intellect, perpetuated the reign of ignorance, discouraged the love of knowledge, superseded Scripture, encouraged the opposite extreme to discipline, by rendering the very name of discipline hateful to the reasoning and zealous; and did all this by making heresy, which God, and not man, should punish, a crime against the state, as well as against the Church; and by constituting the heretic a traitor to his temporal prince, as well as to the spiritual Church, or to his Master in heaven.

The Churches had been already disturbed by Paul of Samosata, and by others who had taught opinions respecting the person of Christ, contrary to those which were generally maintained; when Arius, a native of Lesbia, or, as others affirm, of Alexandria, was ordained deacon by Felix, Bishop of Alexandria. It is supposed that Arius was of the school of Lucian of Antioch, who had espoused the opinions of Paul of Samosata, because, in a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, Arius calls him by the same name of ‘Col-Lucianist,’

management and security of the Christian congregations throughout the world. This is the true meaning of *τὰ ἔξω*, and not that which refers to the episcopate, or ecclesiastical headship of Constantine to the government of those of his Gentile subjects who had not embraced Christianity; while he left the whole authority and power, internal and external, over the Chris-

tian Church to the bishops. This interpretation is adopted by Pet. de Marca, ii. 10; De *Concordiâ Sacerd. et Imp.*; and by other writers of the Church of Rome.

See, for the references to the controversy on the subject, Vedelius, de *Episcopatu Constantini Magni*, in *Fabricii Lux Evangelii*, cap. xiii. p. 283.

which was given to Arius by the opponents to his doctrines<sup>2</sup>—a circumstance which may account for his subsequent speculations. Before he had been ordained deacon, he had been attached to the schism of Meletius, the Bishop of Lycopolis, who had been deposed on a charge of having sacrificed to the gods<sup>3</sup>, and of other crimes; and was excommunicated by Peter on account of having disapproved of his severity. After the death of Peter, who is said to have refused to receive him again into the communion of the Church, even when he was going to his martyrdom, Arius professed repentance for his conduct; and was admitted by Achillas, the successor of Peter, to communion with the Church, and to the order of presbyter. He was then appointed to one of the churches of Alexandria, named Bancalis. Alexander succeeded Achillas in the diocese of Alexandria, about the year 315<sup>4</sup>; and conversing one day with his presbyters and clergy on the subject of the controversies respecting the nature of the Godhead, he expressed some opinions which induced Arius to dissent from him; because they seemed to resemble those of Sabellius<sup>5</sup>; and affirmed that the Son of God had a beginning; and was not of the same substance or essence with the Father, and therefore not necessarily eternal; but that He was of a like substance with the Father, from whom He received a beginning<sup>6</sup>. This difference of opinion divided

<sup>2</sup> On the History of Arianism at Antioch before Nice, see Newman's work on the Arians of the fourth century, pp. 8, 9. On the truth or falsehood of Gibbon's opinion, that Arianism was derived from Platonism, see Cudworth's Intellectual System, lib. i. cap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> He was deposed by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, who was murdered by Maximin, A.D. 311. This Peter was the immediate predecessor of the accuser of Arius.

<sup>4</sup> Socrates, Eccles. Hist. lib. i. c. v.

<sup>5</sup> I refer the reader to Tillemont's History of Arianism, and to Newman's History of the Arians of the fourth century, for the account of the controversy. My business is only with the consequences of the dispute.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbon imputes Arianism to Platonism.

Venema (Institut. Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ, iv. 280) points out the great

difference between the hypothesis of Arius and those of Plato and the Platonists.

Cudworth (Intell. System, chap. iv.) denies that Arius was a Platonist.

The *logos* of Plato was *conceptual*, that of the Christian *personal*.

The Catholics impute the conduct of Arius to ambition (Venema, iv. 280). The Arians affirmed that he declined to be a bishop, and that Alexander envied his reputation as a teacher. Both were in fault. (Euseb. de Vit. Const. ii. 66, 67; Socrates, i. 4; and Sozomen, i. 15.)

Some accidental expressions from Arius to Alexander, about the year 315, are said to have been the origin of the controversy; but Sozomen (i. 15) says differently, that it was from an accidental conversation with some clergyman; and that Alexander hesitated to pronounce which was right. The whole question was—that the

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the assembly. The difficulties of the enquiry were made more and more the subjects of discussion among the curious and speculating controversialists of the time, and the spark was kindled into a flame throughout Egypt, Libya, and the cities and provinces of the East. Some time elapsed before Alexander, the bishop, could be induced to take any active measures to stop the heresy. He at length summoned a council of nearly a hundred bishops, in the year 322, in the city of Alexandria<sup>7</sup>. In this council Arius was excommunicated. Many of the neighbouring bishops favoured the opinion of Arius. The usual custom, therefore, of rejecting from one Church those who had been cast off from the communion of another, was not observed. Arius was not only still received by his brethren, but Eusebius, of Nicomedia, in the following year, called another council in Bithynia; in which Arius was declared worthy of being retained in the communion of the Church. The affair now began to be of more concern to the Churches, because, at this time, every bishop had the power to frame, or to express in words, the creed of his Church; as well as the words of his liturgy. Alexander, therefore, now writes letters to the bishops of the surrounding Churches, explaining his views of the doctrines of the Trinity. He calls upon them not to break the canons of the Church, but to unite with him in expelling Arius and his followers from their communion. Replies were written to these letters by the friends of Arius; and Eusebius, of Nicomedia, of whom Alexander had spoken reproachfully, became the avowed patron and defender of the heresiarch. Alexander then summoned a second council at Alexandria,

nature of God being eternal, whether Christ was of the same nature, and therefore of eternal generation; or of a like nature, and therefore possibly produced in time; or whether there ever was a period when the Father existed without the *logos*.—Venema, iv. 281.

All agreed that there was—First, One Essence. Secondly, That the Father and Son had not perfect equality. Thirdly, That the Son had not a personal and distinct substance before the generation. (Alexander thought that the *λόγος* co-existed with the Father innately. Venema, id. 281.) Fourthly,

That the *γέννησις* was not absolutely co-eternal. The controversy was on the mode of *γέννησις*.

Alexander said, that it was an emanation of the reason of the Father into a personal substance; whereas Arius affirmed, that it was the free production of a new essence and substance not before existing.

Fifthly, That the Son was more excellent than all creatures; but Arius could not allow that the essence of the Father was in Him, to be generated, divided, or discharged.

<sup>7</sup> See Socrat. H. E. i. 6.

in 324, in the presence of Hosius<sup>8</sup>, who had been sent by the emperor to enquire into the matter; and, if possible, to compose their differences. To this council Alexander submitted the letters he had written since the first condemnation of Arius, and demanded their opinion on the controversy. The decision of this council is not recorded. Du Pin thinks it probable that Hosius, finding it impossible to reconcile the contending parties, decided nothing; though in this council the peculiar terms on which the true doctrine of the Church was affirmed to rest, were settled in opposition to Sabelius. The disputes still proceeded, and the whole Church was convulsed by the vehemence of the opposite parties; and scandalized by the open insults and mockery of the pagans around them, even in the public theatre. The numerous letters on both sides were collected. The language of Alexander was of the most severe and stern nature, and Eusebius, who was more moderate, (a very unusual case, for he was more in the wrong,) endeavoured, in vain, to reconcile the opposing creeds, and the contending disputants. The disturbance to the public peace was such, that the emperor, at length, considered it to be his duty to interpose. In the letters which he had sent to the celebrated Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, to Alexander, and to Arius, Constantine had in vain entreated them to be reconciled. He related to them what he had heard of the origin of the dispute, and justly observed, that the topics on which they were dividing the Churches could not be accurately or thoroughly treated without the danger of misleading the people into error or schism<sup>9</sup>. The letter, though verbose and diffuse, is full of

<sup>8</sup> Hosius had presided over two synods at Alexandria by order of the Emperor Constantine. The claim of the Bishop of Rome to give validity to the decisions of councils was not recognized by any contemporary of the fourth century. Hosius presided at every council where he happened to be present. He held at Nice the first place after Constantine. (Socrat. H. E. i. 13.) Next to him were Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, Peter of Alexandria, then the legates of the pope, who are said *advisse*, to have been present; not *præfuisse*, to have presided.—See Venema, vol. iv. p. 227; Ittigius, Hist. Concil. Nicæni, p. 26, et seqq., where

the question is fully examined. There is no authority for the assertion of the Romish writers, Dr. Doyle and others, that Sylvester sent his presbyters to preside. Baronius says they were undoubtedly on the left hand of Hosius. Bellarmine, that no presbyters sate in the general councils. Delahogue (*De Ecclesia*, p. 179), that no simple presbyter presided, and if present, they were representatives of bishops; whence the creed was called the creed of three hundred and eighteen fathers, who were all bishops.

<sup>9</sup> See Euseb. Vit. Const. lib. ii. cap. 64.

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just conclusions upon the folly of the further continuance of the controversy. The interference of the emperor, as might be expected, was in vain. The dispute was inflamed by the other controversy, on the right time of keeping Easter. The pictures of the emperor were defaced. The hatred and tumults of the populace increased. The people were beginning to arm themselves, and the emperor, whether, as some imagine, he was persuaded by his bishops<sup>1</sup>; or, as others, that he desired to display his own oratory; or that he sincerely believed that the peace and good of the Church would be best promoted by the measure,—at length issued his letters, and summoned the Council of Nice<sup>2</sup>.

I shall not discuss the questions, respecting the nature of the Godhead, which were submitted to the bishops in the council. Our duty is to worship the God of Christianity, rather than to understand his nature; and as all the ideas of man, and therefore all the language of man, must be derived from the senses, which are conversant with material objects alone<sup>3</sup>; and as God is not a material object, but spiritual; therefore it is that philosophy unites with Scripture in the conclusion, that we cannot, by searching, find out God. The language even of revelation itself, being so derived, from its necessary conformity to the weakness of human intellect, can give us no near approach, even by analogy, to the discovery of the nature of God. Neither is there as much analogy between the infinite and eternal God, and the ideas which we are able to form of his nature; as there is between the dark lines of a map of the world, and the actual lands and waters, continents and oceans, which those lines represent<sup>4</sup>. But whatever the reason, or the imaginative speculations of men can find out respecting God, that very discovery—that sum of Divine attributes which constitutes in natural religion the notion of Deity—revelation

<sup>1</sup> Le Beau, History of the Lower Empire, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Rufinus, lib. i. cap. 1. Tum ille (Constantinus) ex sacerdotum sententiâ, apud urbem Nicænam Episcopale concilium convocavit, &c.—Ecel. Hist. Auctores, p. 233, ed. Basil. 1557.

Constantine summoned it by the authority he possessed as emperor.—Euseb. Vit. Const. lib. i. cap. 44.—

Οἱ δὲ τὴν κοινὴν ἐκίσκοπος ἐκ Θεοῦ καθιστάμενος συνόδους τῶν τῶν Θεοῦ λειτουργῶν συνεκρότει. — Euseb. Vit. Constant. iv. 37.

<sup>3</sup> See the Excursus on this subject in Stuart's Disquisitions on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

<sup>4</sup> This metaphor occurs somewhere in King's "Origin of Evil."

predicates of the author and giver of that one true religion, of which Christianity, as we have before said, is only the last and most perfect stage. A true philosopher will receive Christianity with its mysteries, rather than reject Christianity with its evidences; and that Christianity affirms, as I am able to read it, the Godhead and the eternity of Christ. Whatever revelation affirms respecting Deity, it affirms of Christ; and I am compelled, therefore, as a believer in revelation, on account of its evidences, to conclude that the Council of Nice decided rightly in affirming the now common doctrine—that Christ is of one substance with the Father, and the eternal co-exister with Deity in the Divine nature. The fall of man proceeded from the presumptuous exercise of reason, doubting the wisdom and justice, and therefore the necessity of observing the commands of God. The probation of man consists in the humble submission of his reason to the authority of revelation. In the next stage of our existence we may possibly comprehend the things which we are now required only to believe. After the lesson we shall all receive from our “great teacher,” death, when we are in our immortality, we may know more, and understand better. At present the Christian perceives, and he is contented with the discovery, that the revelation which was given him to supply the deficiencies of his reason, assures him that the attributes of Deity are predicated of the Son of God; and he will not be so unphilosophical, after he has admitted a revelation because of its evidences, to permit his reason to interfere between the evidences of that revelation and its conclusions. I cannot but believe that reason best shows its strength by its humility; and is then in its proudest and noblest position, when it bows its feeble powers to the discoveries of revelation, and waits for its immortality to develop the phenomena of Deity more fully; which are now only revealed partially to excite our curiosity, encourage our faith, and be the earnest of our future intellectual advancement. We cannot understand how the exercise of the human mind, upon many subjects which revelation has unveiled to us, can benefit the soul of man in this life. They do not seem to be fitted for, nor to be essential to, our happiness in this state. We must live in another world to comprehend the causes for which many of the mysteries of the invisible state are recorded.

The brain of a child is useless to the infant if it remain in the womb of its mother; it must be born into another life to exercise its faculties, and to learn the philosophy which the brain was created to enable it to learn. So it is in this world. The spiritual faculties of the mind are useless to the man if he is to remain in this world; he must be born by the death of the body, into another life, to exercise those faculties rightly; and to learn that philosophy of eternally progressing towards perfection, which revelation was imparted to enable us to commence now, and to secure for ever. Then, and then only, shall we live to comprehend the nature and destiny of man, the causes of the mystery of redemption, and the reason for which the Saviour of the soul was divine as well as human; that man, who is human, might become, what revelation declares may be his destiny, the son of God, and the partaker of the Divine nature. I may not, and I dare not, speculate on these subjects; but I *believe*, and I will, therefore, express my conviction, that it will be found in our immortality, that man is the being next to God; that neither angel nor archangel is superior to him; that as the dog or the elephant is stationary in creation, and the new-born infant is inferior to them in sagacity and instinct, but very soon surpasses them in knowledge, judgment, and faith in an invisible Redeemer—so also it is, that the angel and the archangel are stationary in their higher places in the universe—while the souls of the believers in revelation, who are admitted to that state to which the Son of God invites them; will, at the period of their admission, be inferior to the hierarchy of heaven; but they will pass them—they will pass the angel and archangel in their places before their common Creator. As the infant of a king is higher in rank than the highest statesmen before the throne of his father, because he is a son, while they are but the most honourable of his servants; so are the Christian believers: they are sons, not servants. Angels are but the ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; the heirs of salvation are the children of God, and joint-heirs in the inheritance with Christ! In proportion to our rank in the universe is the greatness of the mystery of redemption; and the mystery is, that, which the speculative, vain, literary Greek despises, but which the wayfaring man, the peasant, and the fool receives; the mystery which Arius

rejected, but which the Church rejoices to acknowledge; the mystery of the prophet, priest, and king—Christ crucified for sinners; the mystery of God manifest in the flesh! I have no hope but this; and I trust I shall never be ashamed of this faith both of the mechanic and of the peasant, of the noble and of the prince, who would obtain the immortality of revelation. But let us pass from this digression to consider the objects of the councils.

The principal objects which the fathers of the several Churches, composing all together the one holy Catholic Church, had in view in calling together the early synods, were; to form those rules or canons by which they might establish the best regulation of conduct to the faithful in general, and to the ministers of the Church in particular; to point out those duties which their vocation and ministry require; the modes by which incipient errors may be repressed at their commencement, and obstinate errors be most effectually rooted out; to ascertain the best means of reforming offenders; to affix suitable penances for each fault; to prescribe the discipline respecting the admission to, or rejection from, the participation of the sacraments; the amount of knowledge, and the proofs of good conduct requisite for the candidates for the sacred offices; what proofs of their fitness should be demanded; and what fidelity and moderation in dispensing the demands of the Church should be required<sup>5</sup>. These may be regarded as a portion of the general business of the early synods: yet there were always more particular and especial reasons for which each of these high ecclesiastical tribunals was convened. The alleged cause for

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<sup>5</sup> Hoc canone ostendunt patres Africani præcipuam causam congregandarum synodorum esse, fidem Catholicam stabilire et exponere, moresque tractare, prius tamen de fide tanquam fundamento esse tractandum.

Dicunt patres ea proponenda esse, quæ a patribus certa dispositione accepta sunt; ut vel hinc patescat in materia fidei patrum traditionem sequendam et tenendam esse.—See Van Espen de Antiq. Can. usu. Opp. iii. 285.

None can doubt, says the same author, that the Church, animated by

the spirit of olden time, desires, so far as the difficulties of the times will permit, to restore the holy and primitive discipline established in catholic antiquity. Those ancient canons, therefore, of which the utility may be made evident, ought by all means to be restored. They are never to be considered obsolete. Not worldly, but Christian prudence, sobriety, and good order, demand their re-enactment and continued observance.—Van Espen, Dissert. i. de Veterum Canonum stabilitate et usu. Works, vol. iii. p. 10.

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which the first general council was called, was the heresy of Arius and those of his sect. With respect to the more especial cause for the summoning the Council of Nice, we must recollect the great disorders in the Church caused by the contumacy of the Donatists; of whose conduct an account has already been given. I have there shown that this schism originated in a cause by no means of sufficient importance to have been made a plea for that disunion which resulted from, much less for the calamities which spread on account of, their irreconcilable obstinacy. Open resistance to the decisions of many local synods, and to the judgment of the emperor, to whom the sectarians had appealed, was carried to such extremes as to threaten rebellion throughout the African provinces of the empire; and the resentment of the heretical partizans was raging to a great degree of violence at the time when the unfortunate disputes concerning the Arian heresy commenced. The vexations which the mind of the first Christian emperor suffered, from the provocations of the Donatists, and the desire, if possible, to prevent a similar calamity from the Arian dissension, appear to have been the powerful motives which induced Constantine to summon the Council of Nice.

But whatever was the cause of the assembling of that council, we cannot, I think, but contemplate with equal delight and interest, the gathering together of its various members from all parts of the world<sup>6</sup>. If the attention of the student of history reposes with enthusiasm on the meetings of patriots zealous for liberty, which is the second blessing only that man can enjoy; much more ought he to be gratified with the meetings of Christian teachers zealous for the truth, the first and greater blessing than even liberty itself; if the mind is kindled into enthusiasm on reading the account of the gathering of the seven provinces which threw off the yoke of Spain; or the assembling of the Congress of America when the more gentle dominion of England was to be resisted to the death; how much more impressive must have

<sup>6</sup> For the account of the Council of Nice, see chiefly Ittigii *Historia Concilii Nicæni observationibus maxime recentiorum scriptorum illustrata*,

Lipsiæ, 4to, 1712; also Tillemont, Lardner, Newman, Le Beau, and Butler, but especially Eusebius, de *Vita Constantini*, vii. 3.

been the union (and that in one hall of the palace of an emperor, whose predecessors, but a few years before, had issued from that very place<sup>7</sup> the edicts of persecution and torture) of those energetic and hitherto suffering confessors, whose presence distinguished the Council of Nice. A short time before they had been driven, with scorn and insult, through the provinces to the mines, and to the scenes of public cruelty and malice. Now they were invited from all the cities and towns of the empire by courteous entreaty, and at the public charge; to consult in peace on the purity of that faith which they had defended with the endurance of torment, and at the hazard of their lives. Why, in this cold and degenerate age, must all our admiration be reserved for the senators of freedom, and none be exhibited for the senators of religion? Though all were individually fallible, and therefore all collectively fallible—though they might be actuated variously, in many cases, by various and opposite motives<sup>8</sup>,—though they were guilty of that great fault so common to good men, of imagining their brethren to be deficient in orthodoxy, zeal, or holiness, and therefore had accused each other in their letters to the emperor, which he wisely burnt before their deliberation began;—yet after we have made every deduction from their honourable estimation, which modern severity towards ecclesiastics, the only class to which liberalism is severe, can demand,—we are compelled to acknowledge, that such a meeting of illustrious and venerable persons had never before nor since assembled. They had come from all parts of the Christian world.—Hosius<sup>9</sup>, the favourite counsellor and friend of Constantine, was there from his bishopric

<sup>7</sup> They first assembled in the palace, and proceeded thence to the Church or oratory, to which the emperor followed them.—See the note of Hen. Valesius, appended to the tenth chapter of the third book of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*.

<sup>8</sup> See these various possible motives enumerated by Jortin, in his *Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* ii. 183 (London, 1810). Jortin ends his enumeration of all the secular motives by an &c. Waddington, who quotes the whole passage from Jortin (*History of the Church*, p. 92),

adds a second &c., as if he implied that other secular motives might be added; but he subjoins, with more candour than his sarcastic referee, a tribute to the intentions, learning, and piety of the confessors at Nice; and he wisely imputes the decision of the council to the influence of those excellences. Both Jortin (ii. 100) and Gibbon (ii. 250, note, 4to, 1781), wish for the graphic powers of Father Paul, to describe the Council of Nice.

<sup>9</sup> Tillemont, *Mem.* vii. pt. i. p. 524.

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in Spain; with Spyridion, of Cyprus, (the reprover of the preacher who imagined he could render the Greek of the New Testament more elegantly,) whose right eye had been torn out, and the sinews of his left hand cut, and who had been sent to work in the mines under the persecution of Maximin.—Paphnutius, the confessor, who had lost his right eye, the usual punishment of the Christian confessors, and who had been hamstrung also in the same persecution, was there from Upper Thebais; with Potamon, the Bishop of Heraclea, who had suffered the same fate as the former, under Maximin; and who endured a second martyrdom under the Arians, ten years after the council, by being beaten with clubs till he was left on the ground as dead.—Paul of Neocæsarea, whose ears had been burnt off with hot irons; Leon-tius of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, who predicted the future greatness of Gregory of Nazianzen; Amphion, Hypatius, Nicolas of Nigra, and others; with Eusebius of Nicomedia, the friend of Arius, with Theonas and Maris, and the rest who were of blameless character, but who refused to sign the Homo-ousian Creed.—To these must be added Arius himself, of whom some historians report<sup>1</sup>, that whatever be his errors, he was a man of majestic deportment, and grave and venerable demeanour.—Eustathius, the patriarch of Antioch;—Athanasius, the deacon, so celebrated afterwards by his consistent adherence to the truth, and his uniform zeal under persecution or in prosperity, from whom is named the creed which embodies, in one formula, the decisions of the Churches on the four principal controversies respecting the Divinity and nature of Christ;—Marcellus of Ancyra, who afterwards, in his attempts to simplify the creed, adopted notions which other councils condemned;—Cæcilian of Carthage, of whom

<sup>1</sup> I say *some historians*, for others describe him to be of a different appearance and demeanour. See the various descriptions of his person and countenance in the first section of Tillemont's History of the Arians, who gives all the references. They are positively amusing. He was both tall, and had a grave and serious air, says Epiphanius. He was dejected, and wasted with the rage and melancholy

which fretted him within, says Theodoret. He seemed to be virtuous and zealous in the cause of religion, says Sozomen. The wound he had received of the devil makes him roar; his body decayed, without strength or vigour; his countenance pale and ghastly; his face skin and bone; his looks dejected with vexation; his hair rough combed, and slovenly, make him look more like a brute than a man, says Constantine.

we have spoken;—Macarius of Jerusalem;—Vitus and Vincentius of Rome, all names well known, and once highly honoured;—with Eusebius of Cæsarea, and others, to the number of three hundred bishops, with an innumerable train of presbyters, deacons, and attendants, were present at this solemn assembly<sup>2</sup>.

On the day appointed for the meeting<sup>3</sup>, the whole body collected to await in silence the approach of the emperor. After a short time, Constantine, attended by several of his Christian counsellors, instead of his usual guards, came down to the Church from his palace<sup>4</sup>. The historian<sup>5</sup> describes, at great length, his appearance and splendour, his courtesy and graceful carriage, his taking his place at the upper end of the room, as the bishops stood up to receive him, and sitting on a lower seat of gold, after the salutations of his reception, and the signal given by the bishops for the emperor to be seated. When Constantine had sat down, the council was addressed by Eusebius Pamphilus, or by Eustathius of Antioch, or by Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria<sup>6</sup>. When this had been done, Constantine rose, and made a short oration, in Latin, to the assembly. The tenor of his speech undoubtedly justifies the charge which the latest writer on the subject brings against him, that he was more desirous of peace than truth, and that he aimed at peace apart from truth. It was, indeed, almost unavoidable in a soldier and a statesman to do otherwise than to regard peace as the principal precept of the Gospel; but though he might have been most anxious on this point, we are not justified in

<sup>2</sup> The general estimate of their numbers was 318. Eusebius makes them 250. Eustathius, of Antioch, 270. Athanasius 300, more or less, and in his letter to the African bishops, 318. Gibbon makes the number of bishops 318, and the total number of ecclesiastics 2048.—Decline and Fall, ch. xx. See Beausobre, ap. Lardner, Works, vol. iv. p. 189. Semler's Eccles. Hist. p. 131. See the list in the account of Labbe, Concilia, vol. ii. p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> The council assembled on 13 kal. July, and held its meetings until 8 kal. September. Baronius is in error respecting these dates. See Pagi, A.D. 325, § 3.

<sup>4</sup> Some little uncertainty prevails as to the locality in which the council assembled, but Pagi shows that it was probably in the Church, not in the palace, A.D. 325, § 19.

<sup>5</sup> Euseb. de Vit. Const. lib. iii. c. x.

<sup>6</sup> See the question discussed in Valesius' notes on the Life of Constantine. Sozomen tells us, that Eusebius Pamphilus—Theodoret, that Eustathius—Nicetas, that Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, opened the business of the council. It is a matter of little moment, yet we may regret that the acts and monuments of the council, though not its canons, are lost.

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pronouncing him to be indifferent to truth<sup>7</sup>. When he had concluded his address, which was interpreted in Greek by some who were present, permission was given to all to speak in their turn. After many and vehement discussions, to which Constantine paid the utmost attention, and in which he acted with great prudence the part of a kind and conciliating moderator; the creed of the Arian party, which had been drawn up and presented by Eusebius of Cæsarea, was considered unsatisfactory, and was rejected. Another, composed by Hosius, in which the word was retained which was agreed upon by all parties to be the most expressively declaratory of the identity of essence between the Father and Son; but which the Arians had refused to insert in the creed of Eusebius; was tendered to the council, and accepted by them as the confession of their faith, and adopted as their conclusions on the controverted question. Anathemas were added against all who introduced the heretical formula; and Arius and his immediate followers were mentioned by name<sup>8</sup>. Explanations were added, to prevent misunderstanding and obscurity<sup>9</sup>. The creed was then offered, for subscription, to the members of the council, who bound themselves, in consequence, to excommunicate from their respective Churches all who adhered to, and taught the condemned opinions of Arius. The laity were not required to subscribe, though they were exposed to the operation of the anathema, if they

<sup>7</sup> Newman's Arians of the fourth century, p. 262.

<sup>8</sup> See Newman, p. 273. I cannot agree with Mr. Newman in his remarks on the justice of inflicting penalties upon a real or supposed heretic, or heresiarch. If a disciple of Christ believes that he has discovered, in the New Testament, a doctrine which has been unperceived by the world, he ought to be at liberty to hold it, and to submit it to the examination and consideration of the Church. Mr. Newman does not think so. In this, he observes, lies the difference between the treatment due to an individual in error, and to one who is confident enough to publish his innovations; the former claims from us the most affectionate sympathy, and the most considerate attention. The latter should meet with no mercy. He assumes the

office of the tempter, and so far forth as his error goes, must be dealt with by the competent authority, as if he were embodied evil. To spare him is a false and dangerous pity. It is to endanger the souls of thousands, and it is uncharitable towards himself.—Id. pp. 252, 253.

<sup>9</sup> I shall speak of these canons below. D'Aguires believes that some of them are lost, especially one on the keeping of Easter; and some say one on the supremacy of Rome. This last supposition is not probable, as the subject was not discussed. The little to be said about the Bishop of Rome was summed up in one of the undisputed canons. It made him equal to others of his episcopal brethren.—Ittigius, Hist. Concilii Nicæni, p. iii. § 66.

ventured on any positive innovations of the rule of faith. BOOK II.  
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All this will better appear from the following synopsis of the Council of Nice:—

COUNCIL II.—NICE.	
Date.	A.D. 325. Sitting two months from the middle of June.
Number of Bishops.	300 or 318, from the Eastern and Western Churches.
By whom summoned.	The Emperor Constantine, on his own authority.
President.	Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, in Spain . . . . Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, was not present, but was represented by his legates, Vitus and Vincentius, presbyters.
Why and against what opinions called.	To consider the heresy of Arianism. Also on the proper time for keeping the festival of Easter ; and to decide upon the power of ordaining in Egypt.
Against whom.	Arius, a native of Libya, and presbyter of the Church of Alexandria. Also against Meletius, a schismatical Bishop of Egypt, who had been deprived. He was allowed to retain his title, but not to possess any authority ; and against the Quartodecimans.
Chief decrees and canons.	The rule of faith was settled by the Nicene Creed. . . . The decrees, twenty in number, relate wholly to matters of discipline. . . An anathema was added to the creed against those who should in any way deny the eternity and Divinity of the Son. . . They decreed the condemnation of Arius, not as to punishment, but <i>as not orthodox</i> , that is, not Apostolic and catholic in his opinions. . . . That Easter shall be observed on a Sunday.
Penalties.	Separation, degradation, penance, deposition, deprivation.
Sufferers.	Arius. Secundus, Bishop of Ptolemais, Theonas, Bishop of Marmarica, banished, not by the decision of the council, but by the emperor himself.
Emperor.	Constantine.
Popes or Bishops of Rome.	Sylvester, Bishop of the royal city of Rome.

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Twenty or twenty-two canons, or, as certain Arabians say, eighty-four, were made. The three points on which they had met—the Arian controversy, the Meletian schism, and the time of keeping Easter, were settled. Arius and his followers were excommunicated. The Nicene canons became the law of the empire by the rescript of Constantine; and so ended the Council of Nice, in August, 325, amidst the general acclamations of all who were assembled. Subsequent councils, and especially that of Trent, were terminated in the same manner<sup>1</sup>. Five bishops only refused to sign the creed, and the general unanimity so pleased the emperor, that he declared himself gratified as by a second victory over the enemies of the Church. He commemorated the event by a banquet, at which all the bishops were present. The twentieth year of his reign had been commemorated a little before throughout all the provinces of the empire. Great

<sup>1</sup> I subjoin the acclamations and anathemas with which the Council of Trent was concluded.

Acclamations of the fathers at the conclusion of the Council (of Trent).

*Cardinal.* To the most blessed Pope Pius and our lord, the high priest of the holy Catholic Church, may many years and eternal memory be given.

*Answer of Fathers.* O Lord our God, preserve to thy Church the most holy father, through many years continually.

*Card.* To the souls of the most blessed high priests, Paul III. and Julius III., by whose authority this sacred general council was begun, peace from God, and eternal glory and felicity among the saints.

*Ans.* May their memory be blessed.

*Card.* Blessed be the memory of the emperor, Charles V., and of their highnesses the kings, who have promoted and protected this general council.

*Ans.* Amen, amen.

*Card.* To his serene highness, the Emperor Ferdinand, always august, orthodox, and pacific; and to all our kings, states, and princes, long life.

*Ans.* O Lord, preserve the pious and Christian emperor. King of heaven, watch over earthly potentates, the preservers of the true faith.

*Card.* To the legates of the Apostolic Roman see, and presidents in this council, thanks and long life.

*Ans.* Deep felt thanks: may the Lord reward them.

*Card.* To the most reverend the cardinals, and the illustrious speakers.

*Ans.* Deep thanks, and long life.

*Card.* To the most holy bishops health, and a safe return to their own churches.

*Ans.* To the heralds of truth, eternal memory; to the orthodox senate, many years.

*Card.* Most holy and œcumenical Council of Trent, let us confess its faith; let us always observe its decrees.

*Ans.* Let us always confess; let us always observe.

*Card.* Thus we all believe; we are all of the same opinion; all agreeing and embrace (its faith and degrees), subscribe (to them). This is the faith of blessed Peter, and of the Apostles; this is the faith of the fathers; this is the faith of the orthodox.

*Ans.* Thus we believe; thus we think; thus we subscribe.

*Card.* Adhering to these decrees, may we be worthy the mercy and favour of the first and great supreme high priest of God, Jesus Christ; our ever virgin mistress, the Mother of God; and all the saints interceding for us.

*Ans.* Be it so; be it so.

*Card.* May all heretics be accursed.

*Ans.* Amen, amen.

rejoicings were made, and the members of the council were dismissed with letters of approbation, and presents of great value, to their several homes and churches.

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I subjoin a new translation of the twenty canons of the Council of Nice, with an account of the reasons for which each was passed. These reasons throw much light upon the manners of the times. All laws are but the regulations of existing circumstances; and these describe more accurately than any other records the events of the times in which they were enacted. They are said to have been passed in a session of the council posterior to that which condemned Arius.

*Nicene Canons.*

I. Whoever shall have been mutilated by physicians for disease, or injured in the same manner by barbarians, shall remain among the clergy; but whoever of sane mind shall so mutilate himself, although he be of the clergy, it is determined he shall cease [from the exercise of his functions]; and thenceforward, that no such person shall be promoted [among the clergy]. However, it is manifest, that this is determined of those who deliberately perform this act, and dare to mutilate themselves; so that any who shall be so mutilated by barbarians, or by their masters, yet if they be found worthy of the dignity, such persons the canon admits among the clergy.

This was decreed to prevent self-mutilation from misunderstanding<sup>2</sup>, or from self-compulsion to observe the vows of chastity<sup>3</sup>, or from the desire to enjoy the society of women without suspicion of inferior motives. It is supposed to have been enacted upon account of Leontius, whom the Arians afterwards made Bishop of Antioch<sup>4</sup>.

Matt. xviii.  
8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> As in the case of Origen and others, see the notes in this canon in Justellus, i. 69, on the code of the universal Church.

<sup>3</sup> Impatentiâ libidinis. Rufin. lib. i. c. 6; ap. Tillemont's History of the Council of Nice.

<sup>4</sup> Recens sane facinus Leontii, qui postea ab Arianis creatus est episcopus Antiochenus, canonis sanciendo causam

dedisse videtur; de quo in primis hæc S. Athanasius. Leontius enim accusatus de commercio cujusdam juvenulæ mulieris, jussusque proinde ab Eustathio, Antiocheno episcopo, scilicet, ut ab ejus contubernio abstineret; ipsum castrandum dedit, quo ita libere ejus commercio uti posset; neque tamen vel ita suspicionem ablueret potuit.—Baronius, A.D. 325, § 147. [To

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II. Since, from necessity, or the compulsion of men, many things are done contrary to the ecclesiastical canon, as, that those who have lately embraced the faith from the way of the Gentiles, and for a short time have been catechumens, are shortly brought to the spiritual laver of baptism; and as soon as they have been baptized are promoted to the episcopate or priesthood, it seems right that this should no longer take place;—because they should continue a certain time catechumens, and after baptism should undergo greater probation; for the Apostolic Scripture is manifest which says, *not a novice, lest puffed up he fall into temptation and the snare of the devil*. But if, in time past, any deadly sin shall have been committed by him, and he shall be convicted of it before two or three persons, such a person shall cease from the clergy. Whoever shall act contrary to these, as one who sets himself against the great synod, shall be in hazard of being deprived of the clerical honour.

The custom of promoting to the episcopal or presbyterial offices one but lately baptized, was prohibited in consequence of the conduct of the Novatians; who refused to communicate with such as had lapsed during the times of persecution, although they had repented<sup>5</sup>.

III. The great synod altogether forbids that any bishop, priest, or deacon, or indeed any of the clerical order, shall have a woman introduced among them, except she be a mother, a sister, an aunt; or only those persons who completely avoid all suspicion.

The object of this canon is obvious. For an account of the Suneisactæ, see Bingham. It seems to have contemplated the conduct of the same Leontius, referred to in the first canon, who continued to live with Eustolia after his mutilation. There is some ob-

To secure the converse of Eustolia, Leontius, a Phrygian, is said to have mutilated himself in the same manner as Origen is said to have done before. This he did while he was yet a presbyter, being afterwards promoted to the see of Antioch by the Emperor Constantius.—Howell, i. 14. Justellus,

i. 69. Tillemont's History of the Council, sec. 14, p. 639. Beveridge's Codex Can. p. 90. Cave adds, that he was deposed from the presbyterate, and joined himself to the Arians, at the request of which party he was appointed bishop, i. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Howell, i. 69, 70; Justellus, i. 14.

security as to the meaning of the words *συνέστακτον γυναικα*. Neither Rufinus nor Suidas explain it, but it is thought to mean females who lived with the clergy for the sake of improvement in religion and piety, and not for any sensual intercourse<sup>6</sup>. Independently of the interest which this question possesses, in itself, as bearing upon the condition and discipline of the Church; it has assumed a graver importance in our own day for having been considered one of the most assailable points of Christian antiquity. Accordingly a modern author, Mr. Taylor, has written a laboured work, the object of which is to prove, that the Church was corrupt, even to shamelessness, from the beginning; that indecencies were tolerated, and that modesty had almost ceased to exist. It is satisfactory to know that this work has not been able to support the examination to which it has been subjected by various writers; and that Mr. Bevan, in particular, has shown that it perverts, and does not represent, the truth.

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IV. It is altogether requisite that a bishop should be ordained by all the bishops in the province. But if this should be difficult, either on account of urgent necessity, or the length of the journey, however, three at the least having been collected together, the absent sending their suffrages and their confirmatory letters, then the ordination shall be performed. But the things which are done, shall be confirmed by the metropolitan in every province.

This may refer to the evils which resulted from the consecration of Cæcilian by one bishop only, and be meant to prevent the recurrence of such effects. The bishops of Africa were not pleased with the manner in which Cæcilian became a bishop, even though they did not all join the party of Donatus.

V. Concerning those who have been debarred, by the bishops who belong to each province, from communion, whether they be of the clergy or laity, the sentence shall be valid according to the canon which declares, that those who

<sup>6</sup> Ittigius, Hist. Concil. pp. 65. 109.

have been rejected by one bishop shall not be received by another. But examination shall be made whether they have been cast out of the congregation by ill-will (*μικροψυχία*), contention, or any other acerbity of the bishop. That this may receive becoming attention, it seems right to establish, that twice every year there should be synods in each province, that when all the bishops of the province come together, questions of this kind may be examined into; and that those who have openly offended their bishop, shall be justly separated from the congregation, and so continue until it appear fitting to the synod of bishops to deliver a more lenient sentence. The synods shall be held, one before Lent, that all dissensions being settled, a pure gift may be offered to God at Easter; and the second shall be in autumn<sup>7</sup>.

To prevent the possible injustice that might result to laymen by being excommunicated from caprice, or deficiency of judgment or knowledge on the part of the bishop, the meeting of frequent synods is thus provided for. The assembling of synods was rather promoted, than superseded by the larger councils. A Church cannot flourish which never deliberates on its discipline or its doctrines. Excommunication by the bishop was always supposed to be decreed with the approbation of a synod. No arbitrary power was contemplated by the Church. This canon confines the decision of the causes to the places where they originated, and so strikes at the assumed authority of the Bishop of Rome.

VI. Let the ancient customs be preserved which were in Egypt, in Libya, and in Pentapolis; that the Bishop of Alexandria should have power over all these, since this also

<sup>7</sup> The former part of this canon was enacted in consequence of Eusebius of Nicomedia having received Arius into his friendship and communion, and having written to Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, that he would readmit Arius and his companions into the Church; after they had been condemned by the council of Alexandria, held A.D. 315, under Alexander, and after they had been deposed and excommunicated.—Tillemont's *History of the*

Council, sec. xiv.; Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* lib. i. c. 23.

Tillemont places the deposition of Arius A.D. 319, p. 595. He also states who were anathematized and deposed with him, viz. Achilles, Aithales, Carpones, and another Arius, priests; Euzoïus, Lucius, Julian, Menes, Heladius, Gaius, deacons; Secundus, Bishop of Ptolemais, and Theonas, Bishop of Marmarica.—*Ibid.* Arians, &c. pp. 9, 10.

is customary with the Bishop of Rome<sup>8</sup>. Similarly both in Antioch and in all other provinces, their own peculiar

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<sup>8</sup> The clause in the sixth Nicene canon, which has been translated by some in language to sanction the claim of Rome to ecclesiastical supremacy, is thus expressed:—*ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν*. The most ancient Roman codex contains the following interpretation of the canon:—*Quod ecclesia Romana semper habuit primum. Teneat autem et Ægyptus, Libya, et Pantapolis, ita ut episcopus Alexandriæ harum omnium habeat potestatem; quoniam et Romano episcopo hæc est consuetudo*, etc. (Labbe, *Observ. ap. Mansi*, ii. p. 688.) It will be noticed, that for *Pentapolis*, the five cities, *Pantapolis*, all cities, has been substituted. To this authority the Roman legates are said to have appealed at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) in confirmation of the right of their primate to universal prelacy. A version of the canon by Priscus, dated soon after the meeting at Chalcedon, runs as follows:—*Antiqui moris est, ut urbis Romæ episcopus habeat principatum, ut suburbicaria loca et omnem provinciam suam sollicitudine gubernet. Quæ vero apud Ægyptum sunt, Alexandriæ episcopus omnium habeat sollicitudinem; similiter autem et circa Antiochiam, et in cæteris provinciis privilegia propria serventur metropolitanis ecclesiis*, etc. (*Mansi*, vi. p. 1127.) By Rufinus the said canon is thus rendered:—*Et ut apud Alexandriam et in urbe Roma vetusta consuetudo servetur, ut vel ille Ægypti, vel hic suburbicariarum ecclesiarum sollicitudinem gerat*. The expression, *suburbicariæ ecclesiæ*, Bellarmine and Baronius have made equivalent to *totius orbis*. Morinus, Valensius, and others say, the Churches of the Western empire are thus signified. Gothofred, Launois, with Salmasius, and numbers more, consider that the four provinces only, which constituted the prefecture of the city, comprised the suburbicarian Churches. Sirmond and others contend, with much propriety, that the diocese of Rome comprehended the ecclesiastical provinces of Campania, Tuscia et Umbria, Picenum, Sicilia, Apuleia et Calabria, Bruttia et Lucania, Samnium, Sardinia, Corsica, Valeria; evincing, that to

these the suburbicarian cities were confined.

See Du Pin, *De Antiq. Eccles.* pp. 87—92, where the question is fully canvassed. Also Giesler, vol. i. sec. 91, 92; note 1, p. 250; note 3, p. 256.

Speaking of the encroachments of the bishops of Rome, between the Council of Nice and that of Chalcedon, Spanheim says: “Innocent began to contend for the right of the Bishop of Rome to hear appeals. Zosimus attempted to obtrude upon the Africans a spurious canon respecting appeals, and impudently asserted that it was made by the Nicene fathers.” And soon after the Council of Chalcedon, the same author says, “Leo I. greatly extolled the seat of Peter, and first called it *universal*.” But very little support can the partizans of Rome obtain from the facts and expressions of their bishops during this age. Baronius and his adherents draw many wrong inferences, distort many facts, conceal others, and endeavour to elude the decrees and institutions of the emperors, councils, and fathers.—See Spanheim’s *Eccles. Annals*, by the Rev. G. Wright, p. 330, and notes 7, 8, 9, Camb. 1829.

The encroaching demands of the hierarchs of Rome for the submission of all other Churches to their authority, and the spurious interpretations of the few words of the sixth Nicene canon, given above, having been urged in confirmation of the right of universal dominion, have contributed to attach importance to the clause. It is difficult to suppose, that those who aimed to extend the signification of the terms to *totius orbis*, could have really meant what they pretended. The above opinions of Spanheim corroborate an imputation of this sort. Custom, previously to the Council of Nice, had never acknowledged the right of Rome to any such paramount power; and nothing can be more plain than that the meaning of the words used in the canon was to confirm to each of the three grand metropolitans those immunities and privileges which each had respectively exercised prior to that great synod. It ordained, that the same geographical divisions by which the

privileges, and dignities, and authority, were preserved to the Churches. This is altogether manifest, that if any one be made a bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, the great synod decides that he shall not be accounted a bishop. But if two or three from strife oppose the common election of all the bishops, and that which has been done in consonance with reason, and according to ecclesiastical rule, yet the votes of the greater number shall be binding<sup>9</sup>.

This canon has been discussed more frequently and fully than any other. It commands that the greater bishops should possess the authority over their districts, which had hitherto prevailed by custom. It is interpreted by the chief commentators to overthrow the pretended power of Rome, to govern all the Churches of Christ; according to its literal meaning. The Romish writers endeavour so to explain the canon, as to make it consistent with the claims of

archi-episcopates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch had been distinguished, should be still continued; that no act of the council should be understood to infringe upon the liberties or jurisdiction of any of them. Had that learned and august assembly meant to have raised Rome to the pinnacle of exclusive dominion over the universal Church of Christ, there would have been no ambiguity in the words of the decree by which such high ecclesiastical monarchy was guaranteed. Expressions tantamount to so novel, so unprecedented an elevation, would have been fixed upon to speak emphatically and strictly the sense and meaning of the well-schooled body of reverend brethren. That the temerity of those who have sought to strain a point of canon law, in support of a principle of despotism so enormous, should have provoked the long logomachy it did, among writers on ecclesiastical polity, is not very surprising. Ignorance, with its constant companions, superstition and infatuated credulity, was the alliance on which Rome must have reckoned in favour of her inordinate ambition. Ignorance has long been the best friend of the priesthood of that power, which may yet perceive that it is not the most desirable friend-

ship to remain unbroken.

<sup>9</sup> Because the jurisdiction of the metropolitan Bishop of Alexandria had been invaded and disregarded by the schismatic, Meletius, to provide against similar infringements for the future, the sixth canon provided, that whoever was ordained a bishop by less than three bishops, together with the written consent of others, and without the consent of the metropolitan, should not be accounted a bishop, and that his ordinations should be null and void. —Beveridge's *Codex*, pp. 212—216; Justellus, i. 71. 284; Tillemont, pp. 63, 64; Du Pin, *Hist.* ii. 125, 126; Clergyman's *Vade Mecum*, vol. ii. pp. 48, 49.

Howell defines the four great metropolitan provinces to comprise each the following districts:—

*Alexandria*.—Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. To these Venema adds Thebais, Mareotas, and Ammoniac.

*Antioch*.—Syria, Cælo-Syria, Mesopotamia, and either Cilicia.

*Jerusalem*.—Palestine, Arabia, and Phœnicia. This is an error, because the Bishop of Cæsarea was metropolitan. —Venema, iv. 166—171; Socrates, lib. i. c. 9.

*Rome*.—The Western provinces.

the Roman pontiff. It ordains, that none be made a bishop without the consent of the metropolitan of his peculiar province, according to the provisions of the fourth canon. It makes no mention of the Bishop of Rome, as the metropolitan of metropolitans. It ratifies the rights and privileges of the sees of Alexandria and Antioch. These rights consisted in the power of summoning the bishops of these provinces to synods, in order to settle disputes among the bishops; and for the transaction of ecclesiastical business of importance relative to the entire provinces, to ordinations, and excommunications; together with deposition and expulsion. The province of Alexandria is defined, namely, Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis; over which the Alexandrian bishop had jurisdiction in the same manner as the Bishop of Rome had over his own province; concerning which there is difference of opinion as to whether it embraced Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, or not. At all events, it included nearly the whole of Italy. The same privileges are secured to Antioch and other provinces. These had been exercised by the bishops prior to the council; and the canon was occasioned by the conduct of Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, in Thebais, who having been deposed by Peter of Alexandria, his primate, in a provincial synod, for idolatry and other crimes, about twenty years before (A.D. 308); still continued to exercise the episcopal power of ordaining bishops and priests without the consent of the chief bishop, and contrary to the decision of the Alexandrian synod which deposed him.

VII. Because custom and ancient tradition prevail, that the Bishop of Ælia should be honoured, let him possess that honour; the proper dignity of the metropolitan being preserved.

The metropolitan of Cæsarea is confirmed in his place by this canon, which gives the Bishop of Ælia the title of Bishop of Jerusalem, and the next place to the primate among the Churches of Palestine. The name of Jerusalem had been changed by the Emperor

Hadrian, after he rebuilt the city, to Ælia Capitolina, Hadrian having been of the Ælian family. No notice is taken in this canon of the power assumed by the Bishop of Rome to regulate and order the precedence of bishops. The Bishop of Jerusalem had probably pleaded his succession from St. James as a reason for objecting to the authority of the metropolitan at Cæsarea. The council did not enter upon the question of right; it merely confirmed a custom which was believed to be based upon tradition. The reason of the canon seems to have been, that the Bishop of Ælia complained that the dignity of his see was lessened from what it had formerly been <sup>1</sup>.

VIII. Concerning those who, at any time, designate themselves Cathari, that is, *pure*, but return to the Catholic and Apostolic Church, it seems good to the great and holy synod, that having received the imposition of hands, they thus remain among the clergy; but before all things it is necessary that they profess this in writing, that they will adhere to and follow the dogmata of the Catholic Church, that is, they will communicate with those who have been twice married, and with those who have lapsed during persecution, for whom a time has been appointed, and a limit fixed, that they should, in every thing, obey the dogmata of the Catholic Church. All those who shall be found ordained, and discovered among the clergy alone [ministering], whether in villages or cities, these shall continue in the same order. But if any of them come where a bishop or priest of the Catholic Church is appointed, it is very evident that the bishop of the Church should enjoy the dignity of bishop; but whoever shall be nominated a bishop among those persons who are designated Cathari, let him enjoy the honour of a priest, unless it please the bishop to share with him the honour of the name. But if this shall not be agreeable to him, he shall give him the office of chorepiscopus, or priest, that he may appear evidently to be of the clergy, lest there should be two bishops in one city.

The eighth canon is directed against the Novatians. The

<sup>1</sup> Beveridge's Codex, pp. 215, 216.

most remarkable, and according to our views of episcopacy, the most objectionable, and utterly indefensible point in it is, that if they have been already ordained bishops, and conform to the catholic discipline, because it is necessary that only one bishop shall be in a city; therefore the Novatian bishop shall be regarded only as a presbyter, unless the bishop of the city consent to receive him as a bishop. Now the Novatians had the Apostolical succession among them, and they could not, therefore, under any circumstances, but of canonical deprivation, lose that distinction. Dr. Burton has shown that there were probably two bishops at Rome at the beginning, one over the Jewish, the other over the Gentile, converts. The proper plan would have been to permit the episcopate of the conforming Novatianist to continue, but not to renew it at his death. This was the conduct of the nonjurors in England.

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The reason of this canon was the desire of the council to promote the emperor's design of securing peace to the Church; and his conversation with Acesius, Bishop of the Novatians, who had refused to admit to communion those who had lapsed during persecution, and afterwards those who had married a second time. The former of these could not again happen under a Christian emperor, as they would not be required to sacrifice to idols. Acesius celebrated Easter, and believed also as the council had decided. They had the Apostolic succession, and the only obstacle to their union was the refusal to communicate with those who had married a second time. The fathers had decided that those ordained by Meletius should continue in the clerical office; they could not, therefore, deny the same privilege to persons ordained according to the orthodox principle. Novatus and his followers had been excommunicated by Cyprian about A.D. 251.

IX. If any presbyters shall be promoted without examination, or having been examined, have confessed their sins, and upon those who have confessed, men being moved con-

BOOK II. trary to the canon, have laid their hands, these the canon  
CHAP. IV. does not admit. That which is free from blame, the Church  
defends.

This canon commends itself to all Christian Churches.

It provides for the careful examination of candidates for the priesthood.

X. Whoever from among the lapsed shall, through ignorance, be ordained, or those who promoted the ordination being cognizant, this act shall not prejudice the ecclesiastical canon; for they being found out shall be deposed.

Those who lapsed during persecution, and were subsequently ordained, the ordainers being ignorant of the fact, are hereby ordered to be deposed. The Apostolic canons had provided the same remedy. Great care was used to preserve the priesthood free from unfit persons.

XI. Of those who have transgressed without any necessity, or without the loss of their goods, or without any danger, or any thing of the kind, as was done under the tyranny of Licinius, it seems good to the synod, even though they were undeserving of humanity, to extend clemency to them. Whosoever, therefore, shall truly repent, shall continue three years among the hearers, as faithful; and seven years they shall humble themselves as penitents, but for two years they shall communicate with the people in prayer without an oblation.

This was drawn up in consequence of the order of Licinius, that the professors of Christianity should be persecuted by every means; that they should be compelled, by loss of liberty, goods, or life, to sacrifice to idols. This persecution of Licinius seems to have been caused by his jealousy of Constantine.—Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. x. c. 8.

The case of Paul of Neocæsarea would be strongly in the remembrance of the council.—Baronius, ii. 76; Tillemont, p. 610.

XII. Whoever having been called by [God's] grace, have at the beginning shown their ardour, and have laid aside

their [military] girdle, but afterwards return as dogs to their vomit, and as many do spend their money profusely, and for benefit pursue warfare; these shall humble themselves as penitents for ten years, even after the three years during which they shall be among the hearers. But in all these it is requisite to examine the intention and degree of penitence. For whoever, both by fear, and tears, and patience, and good works, prove their conversion in truth and unfeignedly, these having fulfilled the time appointed for them among the hearers, shall at length communicate in prayer with the faithful; and last of all it shall be allowed the bishop to decide less rigorously towards them. Whoever shall bear it with indifference, and think it sufficient to enter the Church again at conversion, shall by all means fulfil the whole time laid down.

The object of this canon was to meet the case of those who had been compelled by Licinius either to leave the army, or to sacrifice to devils. If they afterwards offered sacrifice for the purpose of obtaining an appointment, they were subject to the discipline here enjoined, before they could be received again as members of the Catholic Church. The length of the time of discipline was entrusted to the bishop. In this canon the military profession was not forbidden to Christians, except when it became a sign and proof of idolatry.—Justellus, i. 72, 73; Howell, i. 18; Concilia, ii. 75; Tillemont, p. 643.

XIII. With regard to those who are at the point of death, the ancient and canonical law shall now also be observed, that if any one be about to die, he shall not be deprived of the last and necessary viaticum. But if any one whose recovery has been despaired of, and who has partaken of the communion, should recover, he shall be accounted as one of those who are only partakers of the communion of prayer. And generally, to any one at the point of death, desiring to receive the communion, the bishop shall administer it after due examination.

The Novatians denied the holy communion to the penitent lapsed, even at the moment of death, which occasioned this canon. This conduct of the Novatians

was in direct opposition to what was decreed by a council of Carthage in 251, viz., that such as had publicly sacrificed to idols should not be restored, unless when at the point of death, and provided they had begun penance while in health. The examination in the latter part of the canon will be, that the bishop be satisfied of the desire of the sick person to receive the communion; and also, that his penance was begun before his affliction.—Du Pin, i. 54; Justellus, Howell, Tillemont, Concilia, as above.

XIV. Concerning such catechumens as have lapsed, the holy and great synod hath decreed, that they should be three years only among the auditors, and after that, again join the catechumens in prayer.

Those catechumens who had lapsed, are by this canon put into the state of hearers, that is, those who stood with the catechumens within the door of the church to hear the word of God, but who had not obtained baptism.

XV. In consequence of the great tumult and seditions which have taken place, it seems by every means right, that the custom which is found to prevail in certain places, contrary to the canon, should be rescinded; that neither a bishop, a priest, nor a deacon, should be removed from one city to another. Whoever, after the definition of the great and holy synod, shall attempt any such thing, or lend himself to any action of the kind; the act itself shall be null and void; and the bishop, or priest, or deacon, shall be restored to the Church to which he was ordained.

The removal of Eusebius from Berytus to Nicomedia is thought to have been the cause of the enactment of this canon, the provisions of which he again broke, about 338, when he left Nicomedia for Constantinople.—Socrates, lib. ii. c. vii.; Tillemont, p. 644.

XVI. Whoever, either priests, or deacons, or any other included in the canon, [that is, of the ecclesiastical order,] shall rashly and inconsiderately, not having the fear of God before their eyes, nor observing the ecclesiastical canon, secede from their Churches; these ought not, on any account, to be received into another Church, but by every means be

compelled to return to their own parishes. But if they persevere in this secession, they should be deprived of communion; and if any one dare secretly to draw away another who belongs to another jurisdiction, and ordain him to his Church, without the consent of the bishop from whom he has seceded, being by the canon under his rule, this ordination shall be void.

The source of this canon may have been the differences which arose out of the ordination of Origen by Theocritus, of Cæsarea, and Alexander of Jerusalem, about 228, at which Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, was much offended, because he had given him letters commendatory to Antioch, whither he was proceeding when the above occurrence took place. It does not appear that Demetrius had ordained Origen into the priesthood, so that this reason is doubtful.

XVII. Since many of the clergy, following avarice, and the desire of filthy lucre, forgetful of the Holy Scripture, which says, "*he shall not give his money for usury,*" lend money, demanding cent. per cent., the great holy synod hath justly determined, that if, after this decree, any one shall be found exacting usury, or otherwise pursuing it, or demanding the whole, and half as much more; or for the sake of filthy lucre shall enter upon any thing of the kind, he shall be deposed from among the clergy, and taken from under the canon.

This canon seems to have been drawn up for the purpose of preventing the clergy from entering upon those schemes of worldly advantage then exercised.

XVIII. It hath been told to the great and holy synod, that in some places and cities, deacons are wont to administer the sacrament to priests, which neither the canon nor custom hath handed down, that they who have not the power of offering the sacrament should administer the Body of Christ to those who have that power; this also hath been made known, that some deacons touch the sacred elements before the bishops. All these customs are therefore abrogated, and the deacons are to remain at their own grades, knowing, that although they are attendants of the bishop,

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yet they are inferior to priests; and they shall receive the eucharist in their proper order, after the priests, the bishop or priest administering it to them. The deacons shall not sit among the priests, for that is contrary to the canon and to order. If any one will not obey these constitutions, he shall cease from the diaconate.

The reason for the enacting of this canon was, that in the Church of Rome there was not sufficient regard observed as to the distinction of the orders of the priesthood. It would appear that the ambition of the deacons to administer all the rites of the Church, operated also to the enactment of the latter part of it.

XIX. Whoever of the Paulianists shall hereafter take refuge in the Catholic Church, it is decreed, that in every instance they shall be rebaptized. If any of them in time past were of the clergy, and if they have been free from blame and reprehension, having been rebaptized, they shall be ordained by a bishop of the Catholic Church; but if examination prove them to be unfit, they shall be rejected. The same order shall also be observed, both with respect to deaconesses, and also of all who are accounted of the clergy. We must remember that the deaconesses who are of the order, indeed, but have not had imposition of hands, are to be looked upon as belonging altogether to the laity.

Those who were called Paulianists were not baptized in the name of the blessed Trinity, and consequently could never have been members of the Catholic Church, so that when they professed themselves Christians, it was necessary that they should be openly admitted as such according to the provision of this canon. They were followers of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, who is said to have held opinions similar to those of the Socinians, (for he denied the pre-existence of Christ, although he believed in his miraculous conception,) to please Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, whose husband, Odenatus, received the title of emperor from Gallienus, and therefore Antioch was under his government. This canon did not apply to the Novatians, because they were baptized in the name of the Trinity.

XX. Since there are some who, upon the Lord's day, and upon other days in Pentecost, pray kneeling, that all things may be observed alike in every diocese, the holy synod hath decreed, that men [at those times] offer their prayers to God standing.

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Differences of opinion had existed among the clergy as to the most proper position in which the prayers of the worshippers were to be offered up, which caused the enactment of the twentieth canon. The ancient custom was that of kneeling, while more recently some had introduced that of standing. The Lord's day and the days of Pentecost, that is, all those between Easter day and Whitsunday, are excepted.

The determinations embraced in these canons afford an important insight into the state of discipline and opinion at the period. Thus we find provision made, that such of the religious officers of the pagans as might be converted to Christianity, should be accepted as religious officers among Christians. The ancient Flamines were the sacrificing priests of Rome. These might be made bishops on their conversion. They were all subject, under paganism, to the Pontifex Maximus. Gratian discontinued this title, and it was subsequently assumed by the Bishop of Rome, who claimed the privileges, authority, and honours, with the title<sup>2</sup>. We also find a penance of ten years prescribed to those who should have voluntarily renounced their faith, and one of thirteen years for such as should have apostatized to procure any office. The door of the priesthood was also for ever shut against those who should have done violence to their persons, like Origen. The bishop was endowed with the power of granting or refusing, at his discretion, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to dying persons; and if any one supposed to be at the point of death should have received the viaticum, but afterwards recovered, he was not to possess any superiority of rank from the circumstance of having enjoyed absolution. In respect to the clergy, it was decreed, that no bishop, priest, or deacon, should be suffered to keep women

<sup>2</sup> See the Dissertation of J. A. Christianorum," printed in the The-  
Bosius, "De pontificatu maximo Im- saurus of Grævius, v. 269.  
peratorum Romanorum, præcipue

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in his house, unless they were near relations. Such as had sacrificed were to be degraded; but the Novatians were allowed to retain their rank, if they consented to make profession of following the discipline of the Church, and again received imposition of hands. The rights and jurisdictions of various bishops, especially those of Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome, were also defined, without assigning any superiority to the latter. The provision of the concluding canon was somewhat singular, that the custom of kneeling at prayer on the Lord's days and at Pentecost, which prevailed in some Churches, should be no longer continued; and that the congregation in all Churches should pray standing<sup>3</sup>. But the higher object of the council was, that the catholic doctrine might be formally declared, and that a judgment might be promulgated as to the basis upon which communion with the Church was thenceforth to be determined<sup>4</sup>.

The bishops after the Council of Nice returned to their respective homes. John Foxe, the martyrologist, relates the painful deaths of certain persons who were burnt to death for heresy.—What is the connexion between these two events? The same as that between the consolations of my neighbour who died yesterday, and the events which are recorded in the Scripture which is older than the Council of Nice. The principles of good and evil extend to unknown generations. As the blessings of the inspired revelation have continued from the age of the Apostles to the present day, so the mixture of good and evil which attended the efforts of Constantine to perpetuate those blessings, have remained to our own age; and made the Council of Nice the most important event which has occurred in the annals of mankind since the preaching of Christ and his Apostles. Men were burnt in England by the statute law enforcing the canon law. The canon law had become binding upon the principal part of Europe, and among other countries, of England; and this by its union and identity with that portion of the civil law of Rome, which had been received into the European codes after the time of Justinian. Both the canon law and the civil law, and, for a period, the statute law of England,

<sup>3</sup> Stebbing's History of the Christian Church, i. 151, 152.

<sup>4</sup> Newman's History of the Arians of the 4th century, p. 269.

punished heresy as a political crime, and the heretic was a political criminal. This union of the canon and civil law in European countries was derived from the codes, pandects, and novels of Justinian. These were derived from the code of Theodosius. The code of Theodosius consisted of the enactments of the emperors respecting religion. Those enactments were founded upon the decrees and canons of the earliest councils; and upon the edicts, rescripts, and general laws of Constantine the Great, which forced the Christians of the Roman empire to adopt the canons and decisions of the Council of Nice. With the decisions of the councils, canons, and laws from Nice to the times of Foxe, and the terrible narratives he records, I have nothing to do. I shall only consider the one question,—the origin and continuance of persecution, or punishment for opinion without moral or political crime, from the Council of Nice till the Reformation. The line of continued punishment for opinion, cannot be broken throughout the whole of this long period. When we protest, therefore, against persecution, we do not protest against the Church of Rome alone. We protest against the conduct and principles of that Church; but we aim a further blow at the very foundation upon which that conduct and those principles are built. We make Rome the greatest criminal, but we admit, in all candour and fairness, that it must be acquitted of the original guilt. We have no desire to prove any Church to be more erroneous than the facts of ecclesiastical history will warrant. We must, therefore, calmly and patiently survey the several sources of that peculiar state of the public mind in Europe and in England; which could patiently approve, and even applaud and admire, the inflexible severity, which consigned thousands and tens of thousands to the dungeon and the stake in the manner which Foxe and others have recorded. To do this, we must review ecclesiastical history with reference to the development of the several principles which had their birth at the Council of Nice; and trace them throughout in their effects upon the Christian Church. These principles may be thus enumerated:—

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The emperor or the civil power was supreme over both his pagan and Christian subjects.

In questions of religious belief, he was to consult the Church assembled in general council.

The decisions of these councils were submitted to the world in the form of creeds and canons; the creeds respected faith, the canons respected discipline.

The authority of the emperor made these decisions a part of the civil law.

The sanctions of that law were the usual sanctions of fine, imprisonment, exile, or death, added to the canonical punishment of excommunication, or to the Scriptural punishment of being no longer a member of the Christian community.

The consequence of our thus extensively considering the origin and continuance of persecution must be, that we shall be required to examine the edicts of Constantine; and the sources of the power which enabled him to make the canons of councils the law of the empire.

This will lead us to survey the principal councils, whose decisions were engrafted on the civil law as canons of faith, discipline, and conduct.

From this survey we shall be led to the Theodosian and Justinian codes. After the publication of the latter, the sceptre passed from the emperors to the popes. It will be seen that the bishops of Rome then succeeded to the same power which the emperors had possessed, that of making the canons of councils the papal law, as they had before been the imperial law; and that this power constantly increased, and was exercised against all who dared to think, in a manner which the Church disapproved, until the yoke became insufferable.

Before, however, we consider the laws of Constantine, after the conclusion of the Council of Nice, let us pause to contemplate the wonderful fulfilment thus far, of the prophecies which had declared the universal establishment of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. The great contest between paganism and Christianity did not refer, as many imagine, to opposite systems of morality only. The more severe morality of Christianity might have been preferred to the licentious laxity of heathenism; from regard to the peace, happiness, and comfort of society; without reference to the higher motives upon which that morality is founded. If

the controversy had respected conduct and manners, self-government and moral discipline alone, the Christian would not have been persecuted; the emperors would not have interfered; the populace would have been tranquil; Jupiter might have been still honoured, and the temples of those deities would alone have been deserted which protected the profligacy of their worshippers. The real question, however, between the Christian and the heathen, regarded the object of the homage of the heart. It was not, even, whether the God of the Jews was to be worshipped. The question was, whether the Being who was visible among men for a certain time, and was regarded as a man, and was crucified as a man; should be the object of worship, as the possessor of the attributes of Deity, and therefore Divine? After three centuries of struggling against persecution, Christianity won its way to the throne of the emperor; and then, at the moment of its triumph, the doctrine of the Divinity of its author, its chief glory, was endangered by the perversity of its disciples. Neither has this glory ever been withdrawn from the Church, however it may have been partially obscured; because the bishops and Churches have been ever vigilant in adhering to the ancient truth. The summoning and the decision of the Council of Nice fixed the great truth, in spite even of the subsequent lamentable vacillation of the emperor himself, as the irrevocable creed of the universal Church. The most indifferent of the pagan world must have had their attention directed to Christianity, when its contests with the old religion had terminated in the ascendancy of an entirely new object of worship. The God of Christianity was not, as some who ought to have written otherwise, have expressed their faith, "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!" He was not fate, nor a deity who possibly created the world, but who did not continue to govern it; He was not the local god of a nation, nor a demigod invested with human vices as well as human virtues. He was not the invention of the philosophers, a compound union of greatness and mystery, of indolence and of providence. The God of Christianity, whom the Christians worshipped, and whom they called upon all around them to worship, on pain of losing the highest degree of happiness to which an immortal being could aspire, had been seen on earth within the three hundred years preceding, and

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He had been crucified as one despised and rejected of men, though He was the mighty God, and the ruler and maker of the world. The Christian boasted that the revelation in which he believed had declared, that He who was divine became human, that man who was human might become divine. That which was in heaven, said the Christian, came down to earth, that we who are now on earth might be raised up to heaven. The divinity of Christ is the one great truth which distinguishes Christianity. That truth was in danger of being rejected. The Churches assembled in council at the moment when the danger was greatest. The decrees of the first Christian emperor made known that decision to the world, and from that day to the present moment the great majority of the Churches of the universal society of Christians have adopted the words of the creed of this council to describe the mode of their belief. The world was once more at peace after the civil wars of so many years; and that Christianity, which was established in the midst of the general repose, was the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ, as the substance of the faith, which the philosopher, the priest, the magistrate, and the people, had so long opposed in vain. Christ, and Him crucified, although to the reasoning, speculative philosopher, foolishness and absurdity; was the conquering God in the temple of the empire, and Dagon fell before it headless and handless to the ground.

All this would have been most delightful if the history of the Council of Nice could have been completed here; but a great error was now committed by Constantine. He made the decrees and canons of Nice a part of the imperial and civil law. The decrees of the council respecting the divinity of Christ might have been made the doctrine and creed of the universal Church; its decisions respecting the discipline of the Churches might have been received as the canons or ecclesiastical rules of the universal Church; and both the doctrines and canons which were now promulgated as the conclusions of the council, might have been regarded by Christians as binding on their consciences; the denial of the doctrine, or the violation of their enacted discipline, might have still been punished by excommunication only, as before the conversion of Constantine; but the edicts of the emperor changed the spiritual offence into political crimes,

and thus laid the foundation of all the subsequent persecutions. Now there does not, at first sight, appear to be any reason why the opinion of the council should become the civil law; or why heresy should become a civil crime to be punished by the secular authority. The ruler of England may hold the same opinion as that of a council or convocation of the clergy, without declaring that opinion to be part of the law of the land; and it might have been better had Constantine been contented with approving the decisions of the council as an individual Christian, instead of enforcing them by legislation as an emperor. By the former conduct he would have left the Church in possession of its power as a spiritual body; with the additional moral influence of the solemn decree of the universal council, added to the sentence of each bishop in his respective diocese, without introducing the doctrine, that ecclesiastical conclusions may be sanctioned by civil penalties; by the latter, the mode he unfortunately adopted, he began the reign of punishment for opinion, which the Christian Church has still so much reason to deprecate. When their deliberations were concluded, and his sanction as chief magistrate of the empire had been given to their decrees; the command of general conformity was substituted for persuasion to caution and calmness of enquiry. Disobedience to the decision of the Church in council was now to be regarded and punished as disobedience to the civil authority; and banishment or subscription were the alternatives offered to the obstinate and unconvinced majority. A synodical epistle to the Churches was drawn up and published. In this Arius was declared to be excommunicated and anathematized. This was accompanied with letters from Constantine<sup>5</sup>. The letter of the emperor to the Church of Alexandria declared the resolution of the three hundred bishops to be the will of God, and that the Holy Spirit of God had dwelt in them when they came to their decision<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The principal letters, edicts, &c. of Constantine are given by Fabricius, *Lux Evangelii*, cap. xiii. p. 282; in Dupin, 4th century, p. 16; and in Cave's *Historia Literaria*.

<sup>6</sup> Constantine, in his epistle to the Alexandrians and orthodox, declared his belief, that the Holy Spirit of God

was with the Council of Nice; and uses in other respects, also, the same language which was adopted by the Church of Rome to justify its high opinion of the general councils. ὁ γὰρ τοῖς τριακοσίοις ἤρρεσεν ἐπισκόποις, οὐδέν ἐστιν ἕτερον ἢ τοῦ Θεοῦ γνώμη, μάλιστά γε ὅπου τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα,

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By this very form of expression, synods or councils of following ages were described by those who affirmed their infallibility, and relied on their spiritual wisdom. In another letter to the Churches in general, he re-affirms, that whatever may be the conclusions of a council, those determinations must be regarded as the Divine will. In a letter to Eusebius, he commanded him to take care that new churches be built, and that the prefects provide for the execution of the decree; and he directs him to order legibly written copies of the Scriptures to be procured for the use of the Churches<sup>7</sup>. To these letters or edicts—for the formally expressed will of the emperor was the law of the subject—no objection could be made; but in other letters to the Churches, which were generally circulated through the provinces, he declares Arius to be infamous; and not only condemns and anathematizes the man and his opinions, but proceeds to that extremity of censure which was the model for all the future persecutions which afflicted the Churches of God. He published a decree, in which he compared Arius with a heathen, commanded his followers to be called by a reproachful name, and ordered that the books written by Arius be forthwith burnt wherever they might be found. If he had been contented with this severity, the world would not have had so much cause for complaint; but he proceeded to the last extremity, and added, that if any person were found to have concealed a treatise written by Arius, and not to have surrendered it immediately, and burnt it, that person should suffer death. As soon as his guilt is proved, the decree goes on to say, he shall suffer capital punishment. The decree concludes, as if in mockery of the reader, with the salutation, “May God preserve you<sup>8</sup>.”

τοιούτων καὶ τηλικούτων ἀνδρῶν ταῖς  
διανοίαις ἐγκείμενον, τὴν θεῖαν βού-  
λην ἐξεφώτισε.—Binii Concil. i. 357,  
edit. fol. Par. 1636.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Nolan, in his learned work on the integrity of the Greek Vulgate, supposes that Eusebius omitted in these copies the celebrated verse in the Epistles of St. John, on the three witnesses; and that this omission will account for the absence of the verse from the principal Eastern and Western Greek manuscripts, while it is

found in the African or Italic version, which was not affected by the Eusebian alterations.

<sup>8</sup> One of these decrees is given by Nicephorus:—

Si quod autem scriptum ab Ario compositum reperitur, ut igni id tradatur volumus, ut non modo improba ejus doctrina abrogetur, verum etiam ne monumentum quidem aliquod ejus relinquatur. Illud equidem prædictum volo, si quis libellum aliquem ab Ario conscriptum celare, nec continuo igni

From this time forward, the disposition of Constantine began to alter. He became, though variable in his opinions, and alternately favouring the Arians and their opponents, more and more inflexible and severe. He substituted the authority of his own edicts for the sermons of his bishops, and banished the heretics from the cities. He published decrees against Novatianists (though he preferred them to other real or supposed heretics), and against Valentinians and others, by name, in the most abusive and intolerant language. He took away their churches, prohibited their meetings, and forbade them to assemble for worship, either publicly or privately. Search was made for their books, which were burnt without delay. If any of the unfortunate adherents of a suspected teacher presented themselves to the clergy to be admitted to the communion of the Church, they were subjected to a more rigid examination than proper protection of society from danger of error might seem to require.

comburare deprehensus fuerit, supplicium ei mortis esse constitutum. Illico namque in crimine tali comprehensus poenam sustinebit capitale.—Ex Niceph. lib. viii. ca. 25, ap. Spelman, Concil. i. 43.

Gelasius, who is of doubtful authority, has collected other epistles of Constantine, in many of which he speaks with great severity of the holders of such opinions.

Another, given by Socrates Scholasticus, concludes thus :—Sicubi scriptum aliquod ab Ario compositum fuerit inventum, igni tradatur.—Hoc prædico, ac minitor, quod si quis scriptum ab Ario compositum celasse deprehensus fuerit, nec confestim protulerit, ignique combusserit, morte punietur. Confestim enim atque deprehensus in hoc facinore fuerit, capitis supplicium subibit.—Deus vos custodiat.

I find this decree translated in a book in general use, Fleetwood's *Life of Christ*, p. 681, note, edit. Glasgow, 1837.

"Constantine, the puissant, the mighty and noble emperor, unto the bishops, pastors, and people wheresoever. Inasmuch as Arian traces the steps of detestable and impious persons, it is requisite that he be partaker with them of the self-same infamy and reproach ; for as Porphyrius, the sworn adversary and deadly foe of divine

service, who lately published lewd commentaries in confutation and defiance of the Christian religion, was rewarded according to his desert ; and so recompensed, that within the compass of these few years, he was not only grieved with great reproach, and blemished with a shameful spot of infamy, but also his infamous and blasphemous works perished and utterly were abolished ; even so now it seemed good unto us to call Arius and his accomplices the wicked brood of Porphyrius, that observing whose manners they have imitated, they may enjoy also the privilege of their name. Moreover, we thought good, that if there can be found extant any work or book compiled by Arius, the same should be burnt to ashes ; so that, not only his damnable doctrine may thereby be wholly rooted out, but also that no relic thereof may remain unto posterity. This also we strictly command and charge, that if any man be found to hide or conceal any book made by Arius, and not immediately bring forth the said book, and deliver it up to be burnt, that the said offender for so doing shall die the death ; for as soon as he is taken, our pleasure is, that his head be struck off from his shoulders. God keep you in his tuition."—Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. book i. c. 6.*

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While the schismatic was admitted without delay, the heretic was received with difficulty. The deadly Upas, which breathed from its poisoned leaves the fatal odour of persecution, formality, and death to the soul, while the body bowed down in the assemblies of the saints, was now planted, by mistaken zeal, in the garden of God. The Churches of God now began to be cursed, for the first time, with that evil which is more to be dreaded than any open hostility—compulsory uniformity of faith and worship, the unavoidable source of coldness to all spiritual religion, of lukewarmness in devotion, and of indifference both to the interests of Christianity, and to the welfare of the Churches of which they became only outward and nominal members. So began the persecution of Christian by Christian. The visible Church was enlarged; the invisible Church, the true Israel of Israel, was diminished. The frightful punishment of burning men alive, the common penalty for many offences, soon became the punishment for heretics only, and no longer for traitors, murderers, and poisoners; for heretics were considered guilty of the double treason against their King in heaven and their sovereign upon earth. Semler<sup>9</sup> and Jortin are both of opinion, that the severer laws of Constantine were not observed, for they were too atrocious to be executed; and comparative toleration must, therefore, have existed in many instances. This might have been sometimes the case; but the seed of future sorrow, of national grief, of spirituality destroyed, and of uniformity compelled, were scattered. The suppression, both of boldness of enquiry, and of the mental efforts which arrive at truth by the exercise of the intellect, responsible to God alone, instead of being amenable to a tribunal upon earth, received a fatal blow<sup>1</sup>. The communion of Churches was now founded upon obedience to the civil law, instead of the interchange of letters from the bishops and clergy<sup>2</sup>, anxious

<sup>9</sup> *Fuerunt autem sæpe inanes leges et sine vi atque auctoritate, et multi canones observari non solebant.*—Semler Comment. Historici, in præfatione, edit. Hal. 1771.

<sup>1</sup> Jortin's flippancy is so offensive, that it prevents our reliance on his judgment. There is, however, justness in his remark, that the state of the Church, though it was under persecu-

tion, was, in some respects, better before the days of Constantine, when Clemens Alexandrinus and other fathers could maintain, amidst their zeal and truth, some fantastical errors and philosophical reveries, without being persecuted, excommunicated, and anathematized by their brethren.—Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> These letters (called *littera for-*

for the purity of the faith ; and maintaining uniformity from deference to the opinions, and love for the persons of each other. It is true, that the heretics were more to blame in the beginning than the Churches, for they first dissolved the union among the Churches, by the wrong exercise of their common liberty<sup>3</sup>; but the remedy of temporal punishment led to evils worse than the disease. The laws of Constantine may not have been immediately executed to the full extent of their severity; but the time was soon to come when security from popular indignation, and the possession of unlimited power, permitted the unrelenting enforcement of the most tyrannical and shameful of these laws; and the Christian rejoiced to shed the blood of Christian, as the heathen persecution had so lately triumphed over the confessor and the martyr. The laws of Constantine were the basis of the miseries of persecuting centuries. The spark was awhile concealed, but it soon kindled into a flame. Perverted religion became the curse of the world. Men seemed to become demons, and kindled on earth the flames of hell. Compassion, indulgence, and mercy, became crimes, if the heretic were the object of their exercise; and the lesson was given to the world, which painful experience has taught it to know with perfectness, that legislatures must avoid injustice and cruelty in theory, as well as in practice.

Some curiosity may be justly excited among those who are accustomed to consider the supreme power in the state, as a trust for the benefit of the people, so important that it ought never to be committed to the arbitrary disposal of an individual; as to the means by which the Roman emperor possessed so much power in the empire, that his will alone should regulate the religion of his subjects. The Roman senate had not, at this time, altogether ceased to deliberate. By what authority, then, did the conclusions of the emperor, as an individual, however right or wise they might have been; give such validity and power to the decisions of the Council of Nice, that the creed and canons of the council became, from this moment, the law of the Roman people? They were made the law of the empire by virtue of the arbitrary, irre-

*matæ* or *communicatoriæ*) are mentioned by S. Cyprian, ep. xlv. p. 61, ep. iii. p. 8; and their use is illustrated by

Dodwell in his *Dissertat. Cyprianicæ*. p. 8, and Bingham, ii. 4, 5.  
<sup>3</sup> Jortin, vol. ii. p. 265.

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sponsible, uncontrolled edict of the emperor. He commanded the decisions of the council to become law. This power was the result of former gradual usurpations on the part of preceding emperors. Neither Cæsar nor Augustus were able to consign men to death for possessing an objectionable volume. The causes of the phenomenon must be found in the history of the Roman law. I shall give as brief an abstract as possible of the origin of this singular plenitude of arbitrary authority<sup>4</sup>.

Augustus, till his sixth consulate, preserved to the magistrates and authorities the power of proposing and enacting the statutes, which were properly called the *leges* or laws of Rome. He preserved, also, to the tribunes of the people, the power of making the enactments called *plebiscita*<sup>5</sup>. The tribunitian power having been vested in himself, he permitted the forms of the old constitution to exist, though its real influence had long ceased. The power of making the laws, called the *senatus consulta*, was continued to the senate for some time longer. This, too, soon became a mere form; for the will of the emperor was communicated to the senate either in an oration by himself or by the quæstor, who was relieved from the charge of the public finances; and became the speaker of the wishes of the emperor. The senate passed their decrees after the imperial desire had been made known to them. The decree only then became a law when the edict of the emperor was published to command its observance. At length, in the time of Adrian, the edict of the emperor became law, without the passing of the *senatus consultum*. The senate still enacted decrees, but its authority had become virtually superseded. It formed only a court of judicature for great public causes—an office in which to register the ordinances of the emperor.

The imperial enactments, or laws, were known by three names. They were severally called epistles, or rescripts, decrees, and edicts.

The epistles or rescripts of the emperors were laws enacted at the instance of the parties concerned. They were the

<sup>4</sup> I principally refer here to an anonymous volume, entitled, "A Summary of the Roman Law," 8vo, Lond. 1772, and to Butler's *Horræ Subsecivæ*.

<sup>5</sup> *Lex est populi scitum, quod populus Romanus senatorio magistratu inter-*

*roganti constituit, plebiscitum quod plebs, plebeio magistratu. Summary, &c. p. 77, where the difference between *lex* and *plebiscitum* is explained at length. For the different meanings of the word *lex*, see p. 60.*

answers of the emperor to those who applied to him for his judgment and decision, both at home and from the provinces. Thus the canons of the Council of Nice, which had been summoned in consequence of the letters of Alexander to Constantine, became laws by the rescript of the emperor. When the Council of Constantinople was finished, the fathers wrote to the Emperor Theodosius; and petitioned that the decisions of the council might be confirmed by his pious edict<sup>6</sup>. The canons and decrees of the Council of Ephesus were confirmed by the same power. The decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, also, became laws by the rescript of the Emperor Marcian, written to the prefect, Palladius<sup>7</sup>. The fathers of the fifth general council petitioned Justinian to confirm and establish their canons into a law. Justinian not only did so, but expressly commanded that the canons of the first four general councils should have the force of law throughout the empire. When the power of the emperors began to yield to that of the Church of Rome, the bishops of Rome followed the example of the emperors. The canons of the various councils, whether general or provincial, as well as the writings of the fathers, were received with universal deference; and when ecclesiastical controversies could be decided by referring to them, their authority was conclusive. When, however, this could not be done, the parties interested in the several points under discussion made application, in various instances, to the bishops of Rome, who returned answers in the same manner as the emperors had done; and such epistles had the force of law over those who were subjected to the authority of the pontiffs, and were called rescripts and decretal epistles.

The decrees of the emperor were also laws enacted at the instance of the parties concerned<sup>8</sup>, but they were sentences in court, or decrees in judgment. The ecclesiastical constitutions of the bishops of Rome were subsequently called by the same name. The edicts of the emperor were enactments of the imperial will alone<sup>9</sup>; they were mere volun-

<sup>6</sup> Edicto pietatis tue confirmatur synodi sententia.—Godolphin's Repertorium Canonicum. Introduction, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ea quæ de Christianâ fide, a sacerdotibus qui Chalcedone conven-

runt, per nostra præcepta statuta sunt.—Godolphin, ut supra.

<sup>8</sup> See Summary of the Roman Law, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> See Summary, ut supra.

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tary institutions intended for general use. They differ from rescripts, as not being referred to in answers; from decrees, as not given in judgment; and from both, as not arising from solicitation. The laws of the Church of Rome, which correspond to these general enactments of the emperors, were the decrees, or, as they are more commonly called, from the Latin name of the seal appended to the parchment on which they were written, the bulls of the Bishop of Rome. The imperial constitutions, by whatever name they were called<sup>1</sup>, whether epistles, decrees, edicts, possessed the force of law throughout the empire. The whole jurisdiction of the state was with the emperor; and what was granted to Augustus by degrees, was afterwards conferred upon his successors, in the reign of Vespasian, by one instrument; and despotic monarchy was established by the law, called the *lex regia*. So, too, the whole jurisdiction over the Churches gradually fell into the hands of the Bishop of Rome, till the *lex pontificalis* became the only law to the Churches. The description of the imperial law was applicable to the pontifical law. The will of the prince was the sole rule to the people<sup>2</sup>; the will of the pontiff became the sole rule to the Church.

Such was the conduct of Constantine with respect to Arius immediately after the conclusion of the Council of Nice. Thus was persecution, or the infliction of extreme punishment, for the holding of opinion, made a law to the Christian Church. Not only were the opinions of Arius anathematized by the council—thus far they were right in their condemnation; not only was he deposed from his office—in thus inflicting punishment they did not exceed their authority and power; but the heresiarch was banished; and the law which made the possession of his books by an enquirer into the controversy a capital offence, was promulgated by the emperor's letters to the whole empire<sup>3</sup>. Neither was one epistle only written to the Churches and the people; repeated rescripts were published, that none

<sup>1</sup> They were also called, Pragmaticæ sanctiones, orationes, annotationes, &c. —See Butler.

<sup>2</sup> Ulpian, writing on the *lex regia*, observes: quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem; utpote cum lege regia,

quæ de imperio ejus lata est, populus ei, et in eum, omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat.—D. i. 4, 1 pr. ap. Hooke's Roman History. Note to the last paragraph of the last volume.

<sup>3</sup> See Binii Concil. i. 357.

might plead ignorance of the painful fact, that heresy was a civil crime, and that heretics were traitors and criminals <sup>4</sup>. BOOK II.  
CHAP. IV. Such efforts to extend the knowledge of the penalties decreed against a new offence among the people of the empire, who had long been accustomed to consider the punishment of torture and death due to those who would not profess the religion of the ruler, must have been attended with great effect. Some years ago a preacher attracted much attention in London, who expressed opinions respecting the nature of Christ, which were considered very objectionable by many of his brethren in the Churches. The public was much divided on the subject. Great excitement prevailed. The matter was discussed in all parties and families throughout the kingdom. The miracle of speaking in unknown tongues was said to be revived. Those who did not approve of his notions were anathematized by himself and his followers. He was rejected as an heretic by his own formerly selected society of Christians. Still the preacher persevered, and maintained the truth of his opinions, and the certainty of the alleged miracles, to the day of his death. The state, or the government of the country, took no notice of the matter, and those who disbelieved his mission were left alike to their own liberty to do so. Let us, however, suppose that the supreme legislature had interfered in the matter, that the archbishops and bishops, and the heads of the various societies of Christians in the British empire, had first discussed the points in debate with Mr. Irving; and then when they found him obstinate, had appealed to the sovereign to call a council of their whole number to enquire into the nature and truth of Irvingism, and to approve or condemn the same for the supposed benefit of the people. It is done. The council assemble. They decide in public conclave, as they had decided before in private discussion, that the creed of Irving is not that of the Catholic Church; and they excommunicate the

<sup>4</sup> The Greek of the original decree is given by Socrates, and is preserved by Gelasius, in his view of the acts and monuments of the Council of Nice, in the second volume of Labbe's Concilia.

καὶ ἄλλας δὲ ἐπιστολάς ὁ βασιλεὺς κατὰ Ἀρείου, καὶ τῶν ὁμοδόξων αὐτοῦ πανηγυρικώτερον γράψας, πανταχοῦ κατὰ πόλιν προέθικεν.

The expression *πανηγυρικώτερον* would lead us to infer, that the utmost pains were taken to enforce the edict. —See Gelasius, *ut supra*, p. 259.

Spelman gives, in his first volume on the councils relating to Great Britain from Nicephorus, another epistle of Constantine to the Churches, in which the decree is repeated.

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holders of that creed, and deprive them of the power to teach in their Churches. When this is done, the civil power comes in, and adds a temporal punishment as the consequence of their decision. The legislature pronounces a decree of banishment from the empire against Mr. Irving and his friends. It declares that his books shall be burnt by the public executioner, and that every person who shall possess those books after a given day, shall be severely punished, either by imprisonment, fine, or death. Is it not evident that the consequences of such absurdity would be the extension of the supposed objectionable opinions, because of the sympathy of the many with the sufferings of the few for conscience sake; and of the stern adherence of the persecuted to the opinions which were to be refuted by temporal authority, and not by spiritual argument? Yet who will say, that because in England the Church may be said to be united to the state, the toleration or the persecution of Irvingism must be the consequences of that union? Would not toleration be the wisdom, and persecution the folly, of the magistrate? Would not, also, the question of the propriety of the union of the Church and state be the same? So it was with Constantine. It was his bounden duty to encourage, protect, and recommend religion and its teachers. It was an error to enforce, by the temporal power, the decisions of his zealous, but unwise bishops and presbyters, in their condemnation of the opinions of Arius in the Council of Nice.

It will not be necessary critically to consider the canons of the Council of Nice, to enquire whether more than twenty are genuine, or to discuss the genuineness of the letters respecting the sanction given by Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome, to the decrees of the council. There seems to me to be sufficient reason to believe, that the letters on this subject, approved by Gelasius, and other theologians of the Church of Rome, are not authentic; but I pass them by, as my object is to enquire into the causes and extent of the persecution of Christians by Christians, and all other topics, however tempting, must be made subservient to this object.

We shall now consider the consequence of these edicts of Constantine in the formation of the laws of Theodosius and Justinian, before we proceed to the next cause of persecution

—the influence of the Church of Rome, and the establishment of the canon law.

The question has been frequently mooted, whether the persecution of Christians by Christians is to be attributed to the spiritual or secular power. At this early period the spiritual authority had not usurped upon the secular. Constantine grasped the sceptre with a firm hand, and was as arbitrary as he was capricious in his religious decisions; for he soon afterwards protected the Arians, whom he now persecuted, and both the secular and the spiritual were unconsciously equally wrong. The spiritual power was wrong in requesting the emperor to decide between opinions which the Churches should have settled by argument among themselves; the secular power was wrong in enacting new punishments, for the new crimes and new criminals.

The mind of an emperor, however, is no more exempted from the charge of liability to error than that of any of his subjects. Constantine, of his own will, espoused the religion of Christianity, and by his own authority enacted the laws which protected it. Having now embarked in the controversies of its ministers, in matters which to him, at least, must have been of a very difficult nature; he was probably subject to many inward doubts whether he had decided rightly. On this point, however, we know nothing. He certainly soon changed his opinion, or, at least, his conduct towards Arius and his followers. Immediately after the Council of Nice, Arius, A.D. 325, was banished to Illyricum. Eusebius and Theognis were deposed by a synod of bishops from their respective sees, and suffered the same sentence. Constantine, it has been shown, published many edicts and letters against the whole party, in the style of orations rather than that of laws. They are alternately grave and gay, solemn and sarcastic, pious and absurd<sup>5</sup>. He wrote also to the bishops of Egypt and other Churches, exhorting them to union and peace, and firm adherence to the faith. Athanasius had been made Bishop of Alexandria on the death of Alexander, who died a few months after the Council of Nice. Soon after their return to their sees, Eusebius and

<sup>5</sup> They are preserved in the ninth chapter of the first book of Socrates' Scholasticus, whose work is the principal source of the following observations.

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Theognis begin to insult and threaten Athanasius, by questioning the validity of his ordination. His firm attachment to the creed of Nice impelled him to resist every proposal for the return of Arius to Alexandria, much less into communion with the Church. Their next attempt was more successful. They procured the deposition of Eustathius from the see of Antioch, on the charge of Sabellianism, at the risk of a civil war through the province. The troops were called out on both sides. The city was divided between the two parties; those who wished Eustathius to be restored, and those who desired the election of Eusebius in his place<sup>6</sup>. Eusebius refused to accept the vacant office. The emperor professed his high gratification at his conduct, and was naturally more inclined by this appearance of moderation to favour the opinions of Eusebius and Arius. The recall of Arius was at length effected by the persuasions of Constantia, sister to Constantine, and widow of Licinius. A presbyter, who was well affected to the opinions of Arius, was recommended, in her last sickness, by Constantia to her brother. This man persuaded the emperor that Arius had been used harshly by the council. Constantine replied, that Arius should be restored to favour if he would consent to the creed of the Council of Nice<sup>7</sup>; and he wrote to Arius, having repeatedly before exhorted him to compliance. Arius, on the receipt of the letter, returns to Constantinople, and having exhibited a confession of faith, in which (while he avoids the word on which the whole controversy hinged) he still declared, though falsely, that he received the faith respecting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in the same manner as the holy Catholic Church; was permitted to go back to Alexandria. Athanasius justly refused to receive him into communion with the Church. The religion of truth is the religion of liberty, and a Christian bishop could not be, or ought not to be, compelled to receive into the communion of the Church any person whom he believes to be unworthy. Athanasius informed the emperor of his determi-

<sup>6</sup> That is, of Eusebius Pamphili of Caesarea, the celebrated historian of the Christian Church.—See Socrates, lib. i. chap. xxiv.

<sup>7</sup> The story of the presbyter is taken by Socrates from Rufinus, and its truth has been doubted. I believe its probability, because it solves the historical difficulty of the causes of the inconsistency of Constantine.

nation. Constantine threatens him, in reply, with deposition and banishment; while the Eusebian party denounce him to the emperor with many accusations<sup>8</sup>, all of which he demonstrates to be false. The charges against him are referred to different councils, before some of which Athanasius hesitated to appear. He at length met the synod of Tyre, and was by them condemned to degradation and exile. Athanasius sailed privately to Constantinople, boldly met the emperor in the public streets; and there openly appealed to him against the injustice of his condemnation. His person was respected, but the sentence was not rescinded; and Athanasius remained in banishment from Alexandria till the death of Constantine. Arius, in the mean time, had been admitted to the communion of the Church by a synod of bishops of Jerusalem; and a positive edict was issued by the emperor, commanding the bishops of Constantinople to admit the heresiarch to communion in the cathedral of that city. Alexander, the Bishop of Constantinople, was also threatened by Eusebius with deposition, if he refused any longer to communicate with Arius. By the edict of the emperor, too, he would have been subjected, in case of disobedience, to exile or death. Alexander, upon hearing of the decree, shut himself up in the Church at Constantinople. Prostrate before the altar with tears, prayers, and fastings, he intreated of God that Arius might suffer punishment for his blasphemy, if his opinion were an error; or that he might himself die before the day allowed for the discussion, if he was maintaining falsehood. Constantine, before he proceeded to extremities, again sent for Arius, and enquired of him whether he subscribed, without equivocation, to the Nicene declaration of faith. The historian who gives the most ample detail of these events affirms, that Arius, on this

<sup>8</sup> Among other accusations alleged against Athanasius, were some which unavoidably lead us to conclude that the Bishop of Alexandria must have had the power of a secular magistrate of great civil authority. He is said to have imprisoned bishops of the opposite party, and to have done other things which imply the possession of secular power. Constantine had directed the civil magistrate to enforce the execu-

tion of an episcopal sentence. The edict of Constantine, however, which extended the jurisdiction of the bishops to all causes which either of the two contending parties might have resolved to refer to them, even when the cause had begun in a secular court, and in which the bishop's sentence was to be without appeal, is declared by Mr. Hallam to be a forgery.—Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. ii. ch. vii. p. 211.

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occasion, was guilty of the great crime of mental reservation, and that he wrote his own opinion privately, and secreted it on his person; and having publicly subscribed a declaration that he assented to the Nicene faith, he took an oath, that he heartily believed what he had written. The fact rests, says Socrates, on hearsay evidence, and it is doubtful; but it appears, from the letters of the emperor, that Arius certainly took an oath as well as subscribed. Constantine, when the precautions were completed, observed, that Arius had well sworn, if his words had no double meaning; if otherwise, God would avenge. Alexander was commanded to admit him again into the Church. The ensuing day was appointed for the service. Arius left the palace of the emperor surrounded by his friends, among whom he had been residing; and from whom it is not likely he could have received any poisonous drug to cause the catastrophe which now happened. As he went on in procession through the streets of the city, amidst the gaze of the populace, and the circle of his friends, he was compelled by sudden illness to stop before he arrived at the Church. He died of that illness, immediately after he had complained of the first symptoms of disease. The contemporaries of Arius considered his death to be a judicial infliction of the Divine displeasure. The emperor is said to have been confirmed, by the peculiar circumstances of the event, in his attachment to the Nicene faith; while the Eusebians and their friends were overwhelmed with surprise and consternation. A learned modern writer accounts it as "one of those remarkable interpositions of power by which Divine providence urges on the consciences of men, in the natural course of things, what their reason from the first acknowledges; that He is not indifferent to human conduct;" and he goes on to consider the case of Arius as analogous to that of Ananias and Sapphira. I shall only say, that God is an omnipotent God, and I dare not impute any death to that combination of unforeseen events which our ignorance calls *chance*. With respect, however, to the death of Arius being a sign to others of God's anger against his opinions, or a judgment upon himself; we may observe, as to the first, that such judicial interference is not, since the closing of the canon of Scripture, the usual mode by which the Almighty displays his

anger; and, as to the latter, it is possible that the prolongation of his life might have been a severer judgment than his death. Gibbon, with his usual love of the sarcastic, informs us, that the believer in the literal interpretation of the narrative must choose between miracle, or poison<sup>9</sup>. He gives another proof, in so speaking, that an infidel seldom sneers at a Christian without betraying either ignorance or folly. Might not the death of Arius be owing neither to miracle nor poison, but to sudden disease, and therefore to coincidence? While the combination of all the circumstances attendant on the death of Arius, renders this very coincidence so much of a miracle, that we are justified in applying to it the common expression, "this is the finger of God!"

The Christian who is jealous for the honour of his religion, the philosopher who desires to think favourably of human nature, the student of history who wishes to be pleased with the discovery of the facts which prove the flowing rather than the ebbing of the tide of human advancement; are alike pained with the events which occurred during the period between the Council of Nice, and the establishment of the atrocious codes of law which still further multiplied the crimes, and the sorrows of the people. We may pass by the long story without reluctance, though it is sometimes made interesting by the development of the virtues of firmness, zeal, and undoubted attachment to principle and truth. It is sufficient to say, that the picture which has been already sketched of the state of the Christian world, from the accession of Constantine, A.D. 306, to his death, A.D. 336, retained all its colours with unfading freshness. The same contest between the Churches, their bishops, and the people, agitated the provinces, exasperated the sovereigns, delighted the scoffer, and debased Christianity. Athanasius, after many banishments, and as many returns to his see, died in peace in the forty-sixth or forty-eighth year of his episcopate. Other councils were called at Alexandria and Rome, in Milan, in Sardica, (in which a new power was said to have been conferred<sup>1</sup> on the bishops

<sup>9</sup> Newman's Arians, p. 281; Gibbon's Rome, ii. 263, note, 4to edit.

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 347 (al. 344). I use the expression, "was said to be conferred," for the canons of this council are questionable.

They were quoted as those of Nice, and rejected. They are not reckoned among the canons of the universal Church received at Chalcedon.

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of Rome, of determining the justice of the decisions of provincial councils by sending legates to enquire into the matters discussed,) at Alexandria and Paris, in Italy and at Rome, as well as at Beziers, in France, afterwards so fatally distinguished in the war of the Albigenses; and in other places in favour of the Homo-ousian confession. Three councils of an opposite tendency were summoned at Antioch, in all of which new creeds, or confessions of faith, were tendered by the bishops to the assembly, professing the general doctrine of the Council of Nice; only the disputed word Homo-ousian<sup>2</sup> was omitted. Other councils were summoned, also, in various parts of the empire against the disputed word—at Arles, where the legates of the Bishop of Rome were unfortunately induced to subscribe to an anti-Homo-ousian confession; at Milan, where nine years before the Nicene confession had been adopted; at Antioch, Ancyra, and repeatedly at Sirmium; at Ariminum, where the council began by sanctioning the Nicene, and ended by subscribing the Eusebian creed; and at many other places also, which need not be now recapitulated; in all of which the will of Arian emperors was the prevailing motive with the majority of the bishops of the Church, to condemn the creed of Nice; and adopt the conclusions of its opponents. The world saw, with astonishment, synod against synod in the smaller, and council against council in the larger provinces<sup>3</sup>; creed opposed

<sup>2</sup> On the necessity of adhering to this word as the most expressive to denote the supreme Deity of Christ—the one peculiar doctrine of Christianity—see Newman's Arians.

<sup>3</sup> We must not, however, suppose that the councils did no more than anathematize real or supposed heretics; they sometimes passed useful canons and enacted good laws. The council of Gangra, for instance, concluded with these words:—"We ordain these things not to exclude those who would, according to the advices of the Holy Scripture, exercise themselves in the Church by these practices of continence and piety; but against those who use these kinds of austerities as a pretence to satisfy their ambition, who despise those who lead an ordinary life, and who introduce innovation

contrary to Scripture and the ecclesiastical law. We admire virginity when it is accompanied with humility; we praise abstinence which is joined with piety and prudence; we respect that retirement which is made with humility; but we also honour marriage. We do not blame riches when they are in the hands of persons just and munificent. We esteem those who clothe themselves modestly, without pride and affectation; and we abhor uncivil and voluptuous apparel. We have a reverence for churches; and we approve the assemblies which are there made as holy and useful. We do not confine piety to houses: we honour all places built to the name of God. We approve the assemblies which are kept in the Church for the public good. We praise the largesses which the faithful

to creed, and bishops anathematizing bishops, while both parties appealed to the civil power to execute the decrees of condemnation, and punish their adversaries with exile, imprisonment, or death. Here, as in Alexandria, the troops of the emperor were required by the Arian Gregory to take possession of the Church, which the people burnt in revenge after Athanasius had escaped; there, as in Antioch, Macedonius, the Arian, expels Paulus, the Nicenist favourite of the people, and takes possession of the episcopal chair amidst the slaughter of more than three thousand men. At one time the emperor of the East refuses to receive Athanasius, who, after an appeal to Rome, had been recommended to be reinstated in his see; and his brother emperor in the West compels the restoration of a Christian bishop by threatening open war. Constantius, the emperor to whom I am alluding, to avoid this fatal alternative, restores Athanasius to his see. He requests only that one Church be granted to the Arians. The bishop requests, in return, that one Church be granted to those of his own faith in those districts where the Arians possessed authority. The request of the bishop, and the petition of the sovereign, such was the intolerance of the age, were alike refused. Cruelty was committed by both parties; but the Arians, like all who are most in the wrong, were more severe, and fierce, and unrelenting, than their opponents, and committed atrocities which were only equalled in those sad ages, of which we have yet to speak. Hosius of Corduba, the president of the Council of Nice, though nearly a hundred years old, was beaten with clubs till he Arianized. The cities and provinces were stained with blood, and disgust alone can be excited by the tales of mutual and unsparing revenge<sup>4</sup>. Valentinian, in the West, retained the Nicene faith, and was certainly less guilty than his brother ruler. Though a man of most cruel disposition<sup>5</sup>, he showed toleration to the Christians who differed from him. Valens, in the East, adhered to the Arian heresy, and

give to the Church to be distributed among the poor. In a word, we wish and desire that these things may be observed in the Church, which we have learnt from the Scripture and the tradition of the Apostles."—Du Pin,

p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> See Gibbon, chap. xxi., on the Cruelty of the Arians.

<sup>5</sup> See the account of Valentinian and his bears in Gibbon, chap. xxv.

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excelled even the cruelty of the age. Some he drowned in the Orontes and other rivers, drowning being the most common of his inflictions. Eighty deputies, of the Nicene faith, from Nicomedia, were burnt alive in a vessel which he ordered to be deserted by the mariners<sup>6</sup>. This man seemed mad with fury<sup>7</sup>. Being informed, by a fortune-teller, that the name of his successor would begin with the letter *theta*, he destroyed as many as possible whose names commenced in that manner, among whom Theodosiolus, a Spaniard of equal honour and courage, is more particularly mentioned by the historian<sup>8</sup>. The spirit of the age, in short, is best expressed by the language of Nestorius, to the emperor of the day, some time after the death of Valens—"Clear the world from heretics, O emperor, and I will give you heaven. Aid me to extirpate heretics: I will aid thee in conquering the Persian enemy." Difference of opinion was the cause, hatred and persecution were the effect. Misery in private life, and weakness of the empire in public life, were the inevitable and uniform consequences.

In the history of persecution, however we may be compelled, by the fearful amount of its painful details, to speak in general language, Spain bears a lamentable pre-eminence. The Christian faith was planted early in that country, which appears to have been always zealous in behalf of the Nicene Creed. Thousands of Christians, of all parties, were undoubtedly destroyed by each other in the contests which we have mentioned; but they were put to death principally by the emperors, and subsequently to the decisions of councils. The laws of Theodosius, which we will soon proceed to consider, regarded every heretic as a rebel against the civil ruler, as well as impious before God; and man, as well as God, were required, therefore, to punish the offence. In the spirit of such laws as these, two bishops, Magnus and Rufus, and two ecclesiastics, Idacius and Ithacius, accuse Priscillian, Bishop of Avila, of the heresy of the Manicheans.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbon, without foundation, imputes this account to accident, chap. xxv.

<sup>7</sup> Both Jortin and Gibbon, however, have imputed many charges against him to the malice of his enemies, or

the false dealing of his ministers.—See Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, and Gibbon, chap. xxv.

<sup>8</sup> Socrates, lib. iv. cap. 19, to whom I refer generally.

Having been banished by Gratian, in consequence of the sentence of a council at Saragossa<sup>9</sup>, he was after some time restored to his see. Gratian was succeeded by Maximus, who had been proclaimed emperor by the troops in Britain, and before him Priscillian was again accused. The accusation was made with success. After his appeal for a hearing before Damasus of Rome, or Ambrose of Milan, had been rejected, in spite of the exertions of Martin of Tours, who represented to Maximus the injustice of the civil magistrate noticing a mere ecclesiastical offence, Priscillian, with some of his followers, was condemned by Maximus, and put to death at Treves. The remarks of Gibbon on this matter are just, and need not be repeated. Priscillian is generally regarded as the first martyr to mere dissent. He was a Spaniard, and Spaniards were his accusers. As the first instance of the deliberate murder of an ecclesiastic by a civil tribunal for an ecclesiastical crime took place in Spain, so also it is remarkable, that the last execution on record—may God grant it be indeed the last!—for religious opinion took place in that country. So late as in the year 1826, a Jew was burnt at Valencia, with many circumstances of the ancient, and, as it was supposed, the obsolete, *auto da fe*. The pasteboard cap was on his head, decorated with painted flames. The round frock, adorned with the figures of imagined devils, was on his body. He was gagged and tied. The torch was applied to the fagots, and hymns of joy over error, and praise to the insulted God of mercy, drowned the cries of the victim, if cries could have been uttered after the precaution of gagging<sup>1</sup>. Let us hope that such scenes as these can never be repeated, but that the true nature of the religion of Jesus Christ, both in doctrine and practice, will be known in all the dark places of the earth. The generations of man, however, change but slowly. The Spaniards of the present day would not revel in the tortures of the victims of the inquisition as they once did; though they have not yet emancipated themselves from the abhorrence of heresy, as if it were crime. They would not burn and murder for opinion generally, as they once did; though they may

<sup>9</sup> A.D. 380.<sup>1</sup> See the Gentleman's Magazine for September, 1826, p. 263.

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sometimes think and speak lightly of the doctrine or practice of persecution<sup>2</sup>.

From the edicts of the emperors, which were among the first causes of persecution by Christians, we shall consider the second cause, the decisions of general councils. The subject of the early councils has been already briefly reviewed. It may, however, be useful to refer to their origin, and to their gradually increasing importance and influence before the assembling of the Council of Nice.

When Christianity was first preached by the Apostles, it was addressed to the whole multitude of the common people. Under the direction of the Apostles, and their successors in the ministry, by whatever name those successors be called, the people not only formed themselves into societies, but permitted the minister, under whose instructions they were converted, either from Judaism or from heathenism to Christianity, to decide which of them were sincere in their new profession, and which of them, therefore, were entitled to the privileges of the Christian communion, as well as to the privilege of listening to the teaching of the Gospel<sup>3</sup>. This was the real origin of the exercise of so much power by the clergy. In judging of such questions, the ministers of the Church first joined with themselves the few, of whose sincerity there could be no doubt. The first converts formed the council, or chosen friends of the minister<sup>4</sup>. These, as

<sup>2</sup> A Spanish liberal, says Lord Carnarvon, was declaiming against the inquisition, and enlarging on the injustice of its burning for opinion honest men, like himself; "but if there be a Jew among us," he added, with infinite naïveté, "burn him, I say; burn him alive."—Lord Carnarvon's Portugal and Galicia, i. 235; Quarterly Review, No. cxv. p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> There was always a difference between the two services. The first, called *missa catechumenorum*, the last, the *missa fidelium*. All were admissible to the one, the professed Christians only to the other. The first included all that part of the service which preceded the prayers of the communicants, that is, the psalmody, the reading of the Scriptures, the sermon, and the prayers that were made over the catechumens, &c. The deacon then

commanded the non-communicants to withdraw. "Let no catechumen, hearer, infidel, heterodox, or heretical person be present." And then the second service, the *missa fidelium*, or communion service, commenced. This order is as old as the Apostolical Constitutions, lib. viii. cap. 12.—See Bingham, xiii. cap. 1, § 2, 3.

<sup>4</sup> If the word minister is used instead of apostle or bishop, anti-episcopalians will perceive the whole theory of episcopacy; which is, in fact, nothing more nor less than the natural, unavoidable mode in which every religion must be taught. It is the union of ruler, teacher, assistant, and people in one society. The episcopacy which I have here described was that of Jerusalem and Antioch, the first two principal Churches, in which the government of the Christian ruler, the

the converts increased, contributed their assistance in ruling and directing. Some of them were ordained to teach the new adherents. The original minister was the head of the whole society, and each society was independent in matters of discipline, though not of faith, of any other community which had been formed in a similar manner. Several societies or Churches had been already formed in various parts of the world—at Jerusalem and Antioch, at Lystra and Iconium, at Perga and Pamphylia—when a question arose in which all were interested, whether the Gospel of Christ should be preached to the Jews alone, as the covenanted people of God, or whether it should be extended to the proselytes and to the Gentiles, without requiring obedience to the law of Moses. Some of the converts had come from Judea to Antioch, and affirmed that this obedience was essential to the right acceptance of Christianity. The Church at Antioch, on hearing this doctrine, sent up some of its members to the Church at Jerusalem; that they might confer together on the subject. They did so, and came to the unanimous conclusion, that such obedience was not necessary to salvation. This assembly at Jerusalem has been called the first council, and it is supposed to have been the model on which all subsequent synods of a like nature were formed, though others<sup>5</sup>, arguing, that a council denotes an assembly of bishops, or delegates from many Churches, and that this assembly at Jerusalem, since it was the meeting exclusively of members of the same, and not of many Churches, was, therefore, not a council similar to those of after-ages. If, however, the Church at Antioch was independent of the Church at Jerusalem, which it seems to have been; we are justified in calling the assembling of the Christian teachers at Jerusalem by the name of a council. From that time, whenever the teachers of one Church were not decided on the truth of some controverted doctrine proposed by Christians to

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exertions of the ordained presbyters or teachers, the assistance of the common presbyters or chief converts among the people, and the service of the assistants, may be plainly traced.

<sup>5</sup> Mosheim supposes that councils originated in the imitation of the Amphictyonic council among the

Greeks, and refers to Tertullian, de Jejuniis, cap. xiii. p. 711, edit. Rigalt. It seems to me more probable that the early Christians would have derived the custom rather from Jerusalem than from Greece.—De rebus Christ. ante Constant. p. 261.

Christians, they consulted with the teachers of other Churches, without compromising either their own independence or that of their people. We cannot affirm with certainty, that any other council than this of Jerusalem was called together in the first century. Every separate Church, however, was accustomed to meet in council once or twice every year; and each Church, whether of greater or smaller extent, was regarded as a society which was to be governed by its appointed rulers, assisted by their deliberative senate of presbyters <sup>6</sup>.

“In the Church of Carthage,” says Firmilian, writing to Cyprian, “there is a great number of prophets, and the Divine wisdom is distributed among many. On this account we consider it necessary, that in every year the elders and rulers in the Church should assemble together, to order the things which are committed to our care; and if there are any matters of more peculiar importance, they should be regulated by the common advice’.” The Apostolical canons, which are a collection of the laws and customs of the early Churches, published between the third and fifth centuries, order this custom to be continued <sup>8</sup>. The fifth canon of the Council of Nice makes the same decree. By these enact-

<sup>6</sup> Selvagio, *Institutiones Canonice*, iii. 221.

<sup>7</sup> Firmilian, in this epistle to Cyprian, asserts that the Church of Rome does not observe the original traditions in many things, and assumes falsely the authority of the Apostles; and that he is a schismatic who needlessly separates himself from the communion of his brethren by calling them schismatics, as the Bishop of Rome had done to the Christians of Carthage. With respect to the diocesan or provincial synods, he says:—*Tantus est numerus prophetarum, ut multiplex divina sapientia per multos distribuat.*—*Qua de causa, necessario apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos, seniores et prepositi in unum conveniamus ad disponenda ea que curae nostrae commissa sunt; ut si que graviora sunt, communi consilio dirigantur.*—Firmilianus ad Cyprianum, *Opp. S. Cypr.* p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> The thirtieth, thirty-sixth, or thirty-eighth of the Apostolical canons

(for the canon is differently numbered by various editors) commands:—

Δεύτερον τοῦ ἔτους σύνοδος γινέσθω τῶν ἐπισκόπων, καὶ ἀνακρινέτωσαν ἀλλήλους τὰ δόγματα τῆς εὐσεβείας, καὶ τὰς ἐμπιπούσας ἐκκλησιαστικὰς ἀντιλογίας διαλύτωσαν.

“Twice every year let there be a synod of bishops (in the Churches), and let them decide among each other concerning the doctrines of religion, and settle the ecclesiastical controversies that may occasionally happen.”

The same thing is decreed in the fifth canon of the Council of Nice, and in the twentieth or ninety-ninth of the canons of the Council of Antioch, *A.D.* 341. Though Athanasius and Chrysostom both objected to this council, in consequence of some Arians being present at it, Du Pin says, that its canons contain the wisest and justest rules that were ever observed in the Christian Church.—*Binii Concil.* i. 11.

ments the general usages of the Churches became a portion of the law of the universal Church; and there can be no doubt that every Church, in every country, is bound to make provision for its continued purity, its perpetual discipline, and the prevention of those abuses which arise from neglect, or from the unsuitableness of the provisions of one age to meet the wants and circumstances of another. Because the canons of councils are binding on the consciences of members of the Churches, the state, since the union of the Churches with the civil government, has sometimes, as in England, forbidden the synods to meet. The state ought to be obeyed in all cases where its commands do not clash with the Divine law. When any great necessity arises, of which the Church is to be the judge, the synods of the Church are still bound to meet, and to propose ecclesiastical regulations though not laws for the protection of the people against error; whatever be the consequence to the bishops and clergy who summon or compose them.

In the second century several councils were held in Asia and in Greece. The opinions of Montanus were unanimously condemned in these, somewhere between the years 160 and 170. Many were held on other subjects, especially concerning the time of keeping Easter<sup>9</sup>, and the first difference occurred between the Churches of the East and West on this subject. In the third century these synods began to be much increased; and as the power of the bishops, or principal rulers of the Churches, was now, for many causes, much enlarged; and as that power was still further extended by their obtaining the sanction of a council, in preference to that granted them by their own people, councils began to decide on questions, which might, with more propriety, have been concluded by the Churches among which they arose. The principal councils in the third century were numerous. Selvagio<sup>1</sup> mentions twenty-one, of which, however, the most memorable were, that of Carthage, under Cyprian, on the receiving again into the communion of the Church those who had lapsed in the persecution of Decius; one at Antioch, against the Novatians, who refused to communicate with the lapsed, and maintained, that the Church

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<sup>9</sup> Selvagio, *Institutiones Canonicae*,  
iii. 221.

<sup>1</sup> Selvagio, *ut supra*.

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had no power to receive them ; another at Antioch, against Paul of Samosata ; and that at Rome, under Cornelius, on the same subject as that which had been held at Carthage. With respect to the error of Paul of Samosata, the Churches might justly require, that the ban of their unanimous censure should pass upon the bishop who denied the Divinity of their common Lord ; but, with regard to the lapsed, their reception might have been safely left to the judgment of each Church, which might have received the individual penitents according as they were convinced of their sincerity. An eminent divine, whose services are now lost to the world, held a different opinion<sup>2</sup> ; but several bishops who espoused the cause of the penitents wrote letters, according to the custom which then prevailed in the Churches, to many of their brethren ; and the unanimity which prevailed among the Churches, both of the East and West, was entirely independent of any decision made by the Council of Antioch. That council, however, was called, and the lapsed were admitted to communion more readily in consequence of its decision, than if the question had been left, as it might have been, to each Church. It was a question of discipline rather than of faith ; even though Novatian had made it a question of faith in denying to the Churches any power to pardon those who apostatized, under any circumstances whatsoever, from Christianity. Though the members of the Christian Churches generally were still free from heresy in opinion, and immorality of life, it cannot be denied that much worldly ambition began to prevail among the principal rulers of the Churches ; and that ambition was principally excited, or much increased, by their desire to be distinguished in councils ; and to rule their people by the influence of the decisions of the large assembly of bishops ; rather than by the advice and assistance of the people of their respective Churches. The teachers of Christianity began too much to forget that the people were the Church ; and that they were only the ministers. Names and titles of great honour and swelling pretensions began to be assumed. Though the persons to whom these titles were given were generally pious and exemplary men, who had suffered persecution with fortitude, and proved

<sup>2</sup> Burton's History of the Christian Church, p. 357.

themselves to be worthy of respect; this accumulation of magnificent epithets was an unfortunate precedent, and served as the foundation for much subsequent usurpation and folly<sup>3</sup>. They contributed to the encouragement of the absurd notion, that faith must be learned from the authority, rather than from the arguments of their teachers. Such was the state of the Churches when the Council of Nice was called together by Constantine<sup>4</sup>. Whatever may be our opinion of the consequences of the effort of the emperor to promote union by condemning heresy, there can be no doubt that he was anxious to promote the peace and harmony of the empire. He believed he should do good to the Church. The fathers of the several Christian societies were about to assemble to declare their conviction of the real sense of their common Scriptures respecting the Deity, whom they were to worship; and if it had been possible to stop here, as it was intended both by the emperor and themselves that they should do, great service might have been rendered to the universal Church by their solemn decision of that great controversy; but council followed upon council, and all invoking the Holy Spirit to be their counsellor, arrived at conclusions which were alike declared to be infallible, but which were sometimes contrary to Scripture, clashing with each other, frivolous, useless, and absurd. The punishments eventually denounced against those who did not welcome the decrees of the later councils, increased from age to age in relentless, unsparing severity; and were executed with a joy in cruelty which fiends might envy. They meant not such things when the bishops, in obedience to the edict of Constantine, met at Nice; and no reasoning could have convinced either the emperor or his bishops, that the good they might possibly effect, even by unanimity in their decisions, would be more than counterbalanced by the evil that should follow. But Churches, like states and individuals, must learn from experience alone, and that experience has taught us, that the government of all Churches

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<sup>3</sup> Bishop Sage, in his work, "The Cyprianic age," has collected the titles given to the bishops by the Churches before the Council of Nice.

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Nice was sum-

moned in 325, that of Trent in 1545: six hundred councils are enumerated by Selvagio between that of Nice and Trent, in addition to the eighteen general councils.

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must be conventional only; that the consciences of men will not be ruled by authority alone; but by the reason and argument which it uses. Many have believed, that if the bishops who met at Nice had been contented to have ruled in their dioceses, in the manner in which their predecessors had done, communicating with each other frequently and anxiously, by letter, whenever any novelty was presented to their approbation or censure; if they had preserved the truth committed to their charge by appealing to the Scriptures for their creed, and by exercising discipline according to the circumstances of their respective Churches, the unity of the Church might have been more effectually and uniformly preserved. Very few Churches, when compared with the whole body, had embraced the heresy of Arius. If the bishops may be considered, as they undoubtedly were, the best representatives of the Churches of Christ, not more than twenty of the three hundred had been found to have imbibed the poison; and when subscription to the decrees was demanded by the emperor, five only refused their signature. It is, however, more easy to speculate than to learn. While it is probable that no persecution by the Christian civil power would have afflicted the Churches if the bishops had remained in their dioceses, and maintained there the general truth and their own independence; instead of consenting to aim at more uniformity in discipline than was attainable, and at a greater extension of the creed, so as to meet the novelties of heretics, than was at all desirable; we must remember the purity of their motives, the impossibility of their foreseeing the consequences, the justifiable feelings of triumph at seeing their religion becoming the rule of the empire of the world, as their great Master had foretold, though in another sense; and their consequent anxiety to preserve that religion from error which had conquered, by its purity and simplicity, the hatred and religion of paganism. We must remember these things, and forget the evils which the councils inflicted upon the Churches. We must forget that they usurped from the Churches the autonomy of the people, the power of the presbytery, the authority of the bishop<sup>5</sup>, and eventually even

<sup>5</sup> When the Apostles and their and Christians began to form themselves into societies, there was in every

the government of the prince ; and that they were, in all these respects, most pernicious and most injurious. Our subject will not permit us to forget that one point to which our attention is to be principally directed ; that they began the system which the present age rightly declares to be intolerable, namely, the dominion over conscience by authority alone ; the enforcement of the edicts of that authority by the civil power ; and the enactment, for the first time, of the punishment of opinion by temporal penalties. They began the practice, and they established the law of persecution, by permitting the emperor to enforce their decrees by the sword of the secular magistracy. They made heresy a political crime. They made opinion treason, and the sentence of excommunication, the only legitimate sentence of the Churches, a sentence of exile, torture, and death.

Different things from these could not, however, be expected at this time. Many centuries of painful experience were necessary to convince the Christian Church of the inexpediency of enforcing ecclesiastical conclusions by the civil law. The Churches of Christ must have been convinced, that their decrees of excommunication, being just, might properly be executed by the magistrate. It will be more useful to learn a lesson from the past whereby to direct the future ; than merely to condemn the evil which resulted from much undoubted good. The Churches had always condemned the novelties which were sanctioned neither by tradition nor Scripture, and called them heresies. They had, also, uniformly censured the heretic. If the heretic did not submit to their judgment, whether declared by his bishop, in consequence of the agreement of other bishops

society or Church a wonderful and nicely balanced disposition of ecclesiastical authority, by which the power of the Church was prevented from falling into the hands of any one individual body exclusively. The Apostle who presided over each Church was not supreme in it, whether we take the case of St. James at Jerusalem, St. Mark at Alexandria, Linus at Rome, Apollos at Corinth, or Epaphroditus at Philippi. Neither was the body or assembly of the presbytery supreme in those Churches, though

they had their just authority. Neither was the collective body of the laity supreme in those Churches, though they had some power in them ; and those very Churches were entirely supported by the laity. Each of these had some authority, but none engrossed the whole power. The constitution of the early Churches was one of three independent estates, and the destruction of that delicate balance of power, by the usurpation, the unintentional usurpation, by the councils, proved fatal to the purity of the Church.

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among themselves, that the error was to be abjured ; or by a council, as in the instance of Paul of Samosata ; the heresiarch and his followers were banished from communion. This was punishment, though it was not at first of a temporal nature. The members of the council could not be expected to object to the change of the spiritual into a temporal punishment, when the abstract notion of religious liberty and the right of private judgment were totally unknown. The right which every individual now claims, to think, examine, and decide for himself, when he arrives at the maturity of his reasoning powers, and possesses opportunity of enquiry ; is demonstrated by experience to be essential to the happiness of society, in spite of many evils which attend the exercise of that right ; because of the still greater evils which ensue from the attempt to withhold that privilege ; yet before this experience had been attained, its lessons could not reasonably have been anticipated by the bishops, who were desirous of external conformity as a pledge of peace ; and as an earnest of the prevalence of truth. They only saw in Constantine the same zeal which had already induced the rulers of the several Churches to expel offenders from among them, in order to effect their reformation ; and they could not perceive that this very desire to do good, with this ignorance of the right mode of doing it, led, as it always does, to the infliction of greater evils than those which it was intended to cure. They did not consider, that when the civil magistrate denounced a spiritual offence, he was compelled to enforce his laws by punishments increasing in severity in proportion as the real or supposed errors extend or multiply ; and that if the fancies, the follies, the caprices, and the vain speculations of the human mind will conquer the most zealous magistracy ; much more will opinions, when believed to be acceptable to the Deity, extend with the extension of severity ; because the very endurance of the punishments inflicted by the magistrate, are believed to be the very proof of acceptable religion, which pleases the soul, as enabling it to demonstrate its sincerity. Religious opinions flourish most under persecution ; or if the persecution in any particular instance extirpate the zeal for religion, there succeeds the torpor of indifference, the sullenness of unenquiring submission, or the madness and misery of

ignorant and presumptuous infidelity. France would have seen no revolution if the edict of Nantz had not previously extirpated the spirit of religious enquiry.

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From the error, both of Constantine in enacting and of the Church in requiring or permitting the punishment of opinion, an argument has been applied to the controversies of our own day. If, it is said, the opinion be true, that it is the first and bounden duty of a Christian magistrate to give authority, opportunity, facility, and protection to those teachers of religion whom he approves; and to recommend them to the approbation of the people by the public law; does it not follow that the magistrate, having thus united the Church with the state, must unavoidably follow the example of Constantine, after the Council of Nice, and punish mere opinion by the sword? And is not, therefore, all interference in religious matters by the magistrate always an evil? The partizans who thus reason have mistaken a fact for a principle. Long experience has taught the world to maintain the advantages resulting from the protection of the magistrate, while it avoids the fatal error of Constantine; and thus to secure the good without the attendant evil. The Church and the state are then united when the whole community is required to contribute to the instruction of the people in religion for the sake of mental improvement, morality, and peace; and when some greater privileges are conferred upon the instructors of one form of the common religion than upon another. This may be done, and ought to be done, by every legislature, provided it permits the unlimited teaching of other opinions, which do not injure morality or destroy peace. This is what is done among us. But Constantine proceeded much further. Instead of being bound by that law of Scripture and utility which makes the magistrate the judge even of religion itself, so far as its mode of benefiting the people is concerned; Constantine received the principles of his laws from those to whom, as the supreme power, he ought to have given them. He summoned the bishops of the Church, requested their decision on a public controversy, and then punished with the sword the persons whom they condemned. This conduct was not required by any union between the Church and state.

The Council of Nice must be considered in another point

of view. It not only laid the foundation of that cause of persecution by Christians which was derived from the enforcement of its decrees and canons by the will of the prince, who by his edict made them the civil law of the empire; but it was the first of that long series of councils which continued to ordain new canons, which in their turn became new laws to repress incessantly new opinions, and to punish as constantly new criminals. Every council added to the common stock of condemned errors; and punished, deposed, deprived, and banished criminals. The very circumstances which preceded the Council of Nice, such as the general discussion of controverted points, the interference of friends, the exasperation of parties, the mistake that authority could compel the reception of propositions which argument could not establish, preceded other councils up to the calling of that of Trent. The circumstances which attended the meeting at Nice attended other councils also. There were the compliance with the will of the ruling party, whether it was right or wrong, the subdued and mortified minority, the exulting majority, the envy, hatred, malice, and mutual bitterness of both, the compulsory truce between peace and truth by the suppression of controversy, and the prohibition of discussion. The consequences that followed this council also followed the others—banishments, proscriptions, burning the books of the holders or teachers of condemned opinions, and eventually burning the teachers themselves; and, in after-days, unearthing their perishing remains if they had been guilty of the offence of interpreting the common Scriptures differently from the titled arbiters of the controversies of the age. All these were the results that attended the gathering together of the members of the councils of the Churches of God. The surveyor of the history of the past pauses between the prospects he contemplates, while he rejoices, as in the times of the Council of Nice, to see the fulfilment of the prophecies, that the divinity of the crucified Saviour should be acknowledged; but he weeps at the triumph over humanity which attended, so needlessly, the conquest of the cross itself; for he knows the cross would have triumphed even if Constantine had never existed. He rejoices, in the same manner, to see the victory of Scriptural truth prevail in various other councils also, while he mourns

to see in them, as in Nice, the infliction of penal sanctions upon the disputants they condemned. As he still proceeds in his survey, he laments to see the suppression of truth and the triumph of error in the decisions of the later councils, while the severity of the inflicted punishments increases, and the bitternesses of death are enlarged. It is a sad and melancholy picture, and we will contemplate its figures and colours as briefly as possible. But some review of the period, from the day of Nice to the day of the Council of Trent, is necessary, to enable us to appreciate rightly the causes of the persecution of Christian by Christian through this long and painful interval. From the decrees of the councils was derived the greatest part of the authority gained by the Church of Rome through the canon and civil law, before her influence was more permanently established upon the decretals of the popes. Some knowledge of these changes is essential to our rightly understanding that part of the subject at which we shall soon arrive; the influence, namely, of the Church of Rome upon the other Churches of Christ, and the extension of persecution to the utmost by means of that influence and power. For persecution was not, as many seem to imagine, an accidental ebullition of power, terminating in an unintended cruelty; it was the result of the deliberate enactment of supposed preventive law. It arose from mistaken zeal. It progressed rapidly. It raged demoniacally when the partizans of Rome seemed to light upon earth the flames of hell; by the bitterness, the ardour, the delight, with which the executors of her will, inflicted the punishments she had denounced. But we must do justice to Rome itself, and we cannot do this unless we contemplate the causes of the evil; and while we condemn the crime, thus appreciate the extent of the guilt. There is a great difference between the two. Constantine committed the crime of persecution, but the existing law permitted his zeal to appear in this form; and he is less guilty than if he had first proposed, and then executed that law. So also it was with the Church of Rome. When the canons of the Council of Nice were drawn up, and when the edict of Constantine enforced those canons by the punishment of death; the power of Rome was not much greater than that of the other metropolitical Churches of Antioch and Alexandria. Rome was not then supreme over the

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other Churches of God. But when Rome usurped, by slow degrees, till it had at length obtained the ascendancy its ambition had so long desired; it found the law of persecution already enacted by its secular predecessors in the supremacy over the Churches; and it only extended the law to those merciless results, which eventually compelled Europe to endeavour to throw off a yoke, which had, in the course of ages, become intolerable. The councils may be called the parliaments of the Church. It will be seen that every council sanctioned, enforced, and practised the punishment of speculative opinion; till the minds of nations were enslaved, or the yoke of persecution broken. They were all called against heresy, which had now become a new and most abhorred treason; and they all enacted decrees against heretics as the worst of traitors, and the most abominable of criminals!

## CHAPTER V.

### *On the Apostolical Canons, and on the Canons of the Universal Church.*

KNOWLEDGE, concerning the customs of those early ages, when the purer principles and more perfect economy of the first institutions were preserved in the doctrine and government of the universal Church, cannot be too highly valued. All documents, therefore, which tend to throw light upon the subject, demand, on the present occasion, earnest attention. The Apostolic Constitutions, consisting of eight books, and the Codex containing eighty-five canons, known by the title of the Canons of the Apostles, are among the records of this class. Eusebius has been supposed by some to have cited the former; Athanasius and Epiphanius, also, are believed to have alluded to them in various passages of their writings; but they are very generally considered to have been much interpolated, and all allow the eighth book to have been added since the time of Epiphanius<sup>1</sup>. Concerning the canons, it is proper to observe, that the fathers of the first three centuries are silent respecting them;—that many customs are mentioned in them which indicate a date later than that assigned to the codex;—that no appeals are made to them in councils immediately subsequent to their presumed era, on points upon which they speak decisively. These and other reasons lead to the conclusion, that they were not known as the general laws of the Church at the early period which their title imports; and from which it has been alleged they were derived. It is, however, desirable, since they have been appealed to in more recent times, and particularly in support of some of the arbitrary pretensions of the Church of Rome; to come to some more settled opinion as to their authority. The first official notice of them is stated to

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<sup>1</sup> See Cotelerii Patr. Apostol. i. 201. The questions regarding their authority, genuineness, and antiquity, are discussed by Buddeus, Isagog. ad Theolog. Univ. p. 747.

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have been at the second Council of Constantinople. Now there are sufficient reasons, as will be subsequently shown, for assigning to many of these canons a very early date; and it will appear equally certain that others of them are much less ancient. The following considerations, then, necessarily suggest themselves:—that every distinct see, and more especially every metropolitan Church, would, at its first establishment, begin to register all rules to be observed in the administration of its affairs;—that these registers would include, from time to time, the enactments of numberless minor synods, as well as those of the greater councils;—and that, consequently, there would be preserved in these various records a successive register of precepts and laws enacted from the foundation of each bishopric. It may, therefore, by way of reducing the difficulty, and placing the question in a more distinct form, be reasonably assumed; that certain bishops of the most ancient dioceses might agree among themselves to order selections or abstracts of the earliest and most important rules contained in their registers, to be throughout made for the purpose of establishing an uniformity of discipline in their respective jurisdictions. This mutual good understanding would be voluntary, and exercised at their own discretion to promote the cause of that Gospel dispensation, of which they were ministers. Copies of such abstracts being in time multiplied, they would at length become acknowledged canons; though few might have resulted from the greater councils. Had they, indeed, ever been submitted for acceptance and ratification to any public assembly of the fathers, there would not have been any ambiguity concerning them; and it is still difficult to trace the code to any positive date, or to discover any satisfactory authority under which it may have been first framed. Gieseler says, “much may be gathered for the history of Church usages in this period (193 to 324) from the *Constitutiones et Canones Apostolicæ*,” and as the investigation of them by Krabbe contains all that can be usefully said upon them, a translation of the eighty canons, and of the observations of that author upon each of them, is accordingly here given<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The edition here followed is that of Binius, in his *Concil. General. i. 6*, of Cotelierius, in his *Patr. Apostol. edit. fol. Paris, 1636*, has also been i. 442, fol. Amst. 1724. The edition occasionally consulted.

*Apostolical Canons.*

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I. Let a bishop be ordained (consecrated) by two or three bishops.

II. A presbyter, a deacon, and the rest of the clergy, shall be ordained by one bishop.

III. If any bishop or presbyter, contrary to the ordinance of the Lord concerning sacrifice, shall bring to the altar any other things, whether honey, or milk, or strong drink, instead of wine, or preserved things, or birds, or other animals, or vegetables, he shall be deposed. Let him, however, bring new corn, or grapes, at the proper season. Nor is it allowed that he offer at the altar any thing else but oil for the holy light, and incense at the time of the holy oblation.

IV. All other fruit shall be taken home as first fruits for the bishop and presbyters, but they are not to be laid upon the altar. And it is evident that the bishop and presbyters shall distribute to the deacons, and the rest of the clergy.

V. A bishop, a priest, or a deacon, shall not, under pretence of religion, put away his wife; but if he do, let him be put apart (excommunicated), and if he persevere, he shall be deposed.

VI. A bishop, priest, or deacon, shall not undertake secular employments; if so, he shall be deposed.

VII. If any bishop, priest, or deacon, celebrate the holy festival of Easter before the vernal equinox, with the Jews, he shall be deposed.

VIII. If a bishop, or priest, or deacon, shall celebrate the holy passover before the vernal equinox, along with the Jews, let him be deposed.

IX. If any bishop, priest, or deacon, or any person of the ecclesiastical catalogue, shall not communicate, the oblation having been made, let him show cause, so that if it shall seem reasonable, he may be forgiven; but if he cannot give any reason, let him be excommunicated as one who is a cause of offence to the people, and hath brought suspicion against him who made the oblation, as if he had not offered it rightly.

X. It is expedient that all the faithful who enter the Church, and hear the Scriptures, but do not remain for

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prayer and the holy communion, thus bringing confusion into the Church, should be excommunicated.

XI. Whoever shall have offered up a prayer with an excommunicated person, even in the house, shall be excommunicated.

XII. Whoever being a clerk shall pray with a deposed clerk, as with a clerk, shall himself be deposed.

XIII. Whoever, either clergy or laic, being excommunicated, or not received again, departing to another city, shall there be received without letters recommendatory, both the receiver and the received shall be separate; but if he have been excommunicated, the excommunication shall be increased as of one who has lied, and seduced the Church of God.

XIV. A bishop shall not be allowed to pass from his own diocese (*parœchia*) to another, even if he be requested by many so to do, unless some approvable reason shall be given, since it may be more for the gain than the improvement in piety of those who live there; and this he shall not do of himself, but by the judgment and earnest exhortation of many bishops.

XV. If a priest or deacon, or indeed any of the clergy, shall pass from his own parish to another, and when he hath so passed, shall continue in that other parish contrary to the decision of his bishop, we order, that he no longer perform divine service; more especially if, after his bishop having exhorted him to return, he contumaciously continue to disobey. Nevertheless, there he may communicate as a laic.

XVI. But if the bishop, under whom they are, shall not enforce the cessation from their office, decreed against them, but receive them as the clergy, he shall be excommunicated as a teacher of confusion.

XVII. Whoever after baptism shall have twice married, or kept a concubine, cannot become a bishop, a priest, or deacon, or be indeed of the sacerdotal order.

XVIII. He who shall marry a widow, or one divorced, or a prostitute, or a female slave, or an actress, cannot be a bishop, a priest, a deacon, or of the sacerdotal order.

XIX. Whoever shall marry two sisters, or a cousin-german, cannot be a clerk.

XX. Any of the clergy becoming surety, shall be deposed.

XXI. An eunuch, if he shall have become so by injury from men, or in persecution, or was so born, and is fit for the dignity and office, may become a bishop.

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XXII. Whoever shall mutilate himself, cannot be of the clergy; because he is his own destroyer, and the enemy of the work of God.

XXIII. Whoever, being of the clergy, shall mutilate himself, shall be deposed; for he is his own destroyer.

XXIV. If a laic mutilate himself, he shall be excommunicated for three years: he is the plotter against his own life.

XXV. A bishop, priest, or deacon, having been convicted of fornication, or perjury, or theft, shall be deposed, not separated; for the Scripture says, Thou shalt not punish the same offence twice.

Nahum i. 9.  
LXX vers.

XXVI. So, for the rest of the clergy.

XXVII. Of those who have been promoted to the rank of clergy, when unmarried, we order, if they will, that the readers and singers alone may marry.

XXVIII. We command that a bishop, priest, or deacon, who shall strike the faithful, committing error, or the faithless doing an injury, and on this account wishing to affright them, shall be deposed; for the Lord hath not so taught us; on the contrary, He having been struck, did not strike again; having been reviled, He reviled not; having been threatened, He threatened not again.

XXIX. If any bishop, priest, or deacon, having been justly deposed for manifest crime, shall at any time dare to take to himself the office before entrusted to him, he shall be cut off from the Church altogether.

XXX. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, shall have obtained this dignity by money, both he shall be deposed and the person who ordained him; and shall be altogether cut off from communion, as Simon Magus by "me Peter."

XXXI. If a bishop, by the assistance of secular princes, shall have obtained rule in the Church, he shall be deposed and separated, and all who communicate with him.

XXXII. If any priest, disregarding his own bishop, shall collect congregations apart, and raise another altar, his own bishop not having been justly charged with irreligion or injustice, he shall be deposed; for he is seditious and a

tyrant; the rest of the clergy and those who congregate to them shall also be deposed; but the laics shall be separated. These things shall be done after the first, second, or third admonition of the bishop.

XXXIII. If a priest or deacon shall have been separated by a bishop, it shall not be allowed another to reinstate him, but the bishop who separated him, except this bishop who so separated him shall have died.

XXXIV. No foreign bishop, priest, or deacon, of another district, shall be received without letters recommendatory. These having been produced, they shall be examined; and if they be found preachers of true religion, they shall be received; if not, you shall afford them such things as are necessary, but not admit them to communion, because many things are surreptitiously accomplished.

XXXV. The bishops of every nation (or kingdom) ought to acknowledge him who is first among them, and esteem him as chief, and do nothing of any importance or difficulty without his assent; but each should perform those things alone which pertain to their own district, and the villages subject to them. Neither ought he (the first) to do any thing without the opinion of all the rest: for thus there will be concord, and God will be glorified through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

XXXVI. A bishop shall not dare to ordain, beyond his own boundaries, in cities or districts not subject to him; but if he shall be convicted of having done so, contrary to the opinion of those who rule over those cities or districts, both he and those whom he has ordained shall be deposed.

XXXVII. If an ordained bishop shall not undertake the ministry and care of the people committed to him, he shall be separated until he undertake it. So also as to a priest and deacon. However, if he shall have departed without undertaking this office, yet not from his own choice, but on account of the improbity of the people, he shall still continue a bishop; nevertheless, the clergy of that city shall be excommunicated, because they were not found correctors of the insolence of the people.

XXXVIII. Twice a year there shall be a synod of bishops, and they shall among themselves examine dogmas of religion, and determine all ecclesiastical controversies which may

occur; the first on the fourth week of Pentecost, and the second on the twelfth day of October.

XXXIX. The bishop shall rule over all ecclesiastical affairs, and administer them, as in the sight of God. He shall not appropriate to himself, or his near relations, any of those things belonging to God. But if his relatives be poor, he may relieve them as poor; but he shall not, on their account, dispose of what belongs to the Church.

XL. Priests and deacons shall do nothing without the approbation of the bishop, for to him the people of the Lord are entrusted, and for their souls will he be required to give an account. The private property of a bishop (if he have any) shall be distinct from that which is dedicated to God; so that a dying bishop may have power to leave his own to whom, and how he will. Nor shall the property of a bishop who has not had wife, and children, and relations, and dependents, be lost under the appearance of ecclesiastical property; because it is just before God and man, that neither the Church suffer any loss in consequence of its ignorance of the bishop's possessions; nor the bishop, nor his relatives, suffer loss on account of the Church, or should fall into law-suits and litigations which may pertain to it, and surround his death with maledictions.

XLI. We order that a bishop have power over the possessions of the Church, for if the precious souls of men are to be entrusted to him, much more are the Church's pecuniary matters; that he may be able to minister all things, and to administer to those who need, by the priests and deacons, in the fear of God, and in all care. But (if required) he may receive, also, what is necessary for the use of himself and of the brethren who are received in hospitality, so that they may in no wise want. For the law of God decrees, that they who serve at the altar, should live by the altar, seeing that no soldier ever took arms against the enemy at his own charges.

XLII. A bishop, priest, or deacon, spending his time in dice or drunkenness, shall either desist or be deposed.

XLIII. A sub-deacon, a reader, or chanter, doing the like, shall either desist or be excommunicated. So also the laity.

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XLIV. A bishop, priest, or deacon, exacting usury from his debtors, shall either desist or be deposed.

XLV. A bishop, priest, or deacon, who himself shall have prayed with heretics, shall only be excommunicated; but if he shall have given encouragement to other clergy to do likewise, he shall be deposed.

XLVI. We order, that a bishop or priest receiving the baptism or sacrifice of heretics, shall be deposed. For what communion has Christ with Belial? or what part has the faithful with an unbeliever?

XLVII. A bishop or priest who shall rebaptize him who hath already received true baptism, or who shall not baptize him who has been polluted by the pagans, shall be deposed, as one who derides the cross and death of Christ, and who discerns not true priests from false ones.

XLVIII. If a laic, having divorced his own wife, shall marry another, or take one divorced, he shall be excommunicated.

XLIX. If any bishop or priest, contrary to the ordinance of the Lord, shall not baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but in the name of three Eternals, or three Sons, or three Holy Ghosts, he shall be deposed.

L. If any bishop or priest shall not perform the three immersions of one mystery, but only one immersion given in the death of Christ, he shall be deposed. For the Lord did not command, Baptize ye into my death; but, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

LI. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, or any of the sacerdotal order, shall abstain from marriage, from meat, and from wine, not from any religious feeling of forbearance, but from repugnance, forgetting that God made all things very good, and that He created man, male and female, but blasphemously calumniates his workmanship, he shall either repent, or be deposed, and cast out of the Church. So also a laic.

LII. If a bishop or priest do not receive him who is converted from his sins, but rejects him, he shall be deposed; since he grieves Christ, who says, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

LIII. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, shall not, on festal

days, take flesh and wine, abhorring it, but not for the sake of religious exercise, he shall be deposed; as one who has his conscience seared, and as the cause of offence to many.

LIV. If one of the clergy be found eating in a tavern, he shall be excommunicated, unless he shall have been compelled by necessity to enter a public inn while upon his journeying.

LV. If any of the clergy revile the bishop, he shall be deposed; for "thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

LVI. If any clerk shall revile a priest or deacon, he shall be separated.

LVII. If any of the clergy shall mock the crippled, the deaf, the blind, or him who halts in his walk, he shall be excommunicated. So also for the laity.

LVIII. A bishop or priest who shall not watch over the clergy or the people, and does not teach them piety, shall be excommunicated; and if he persevere in his negligence and idleness, he shall be deposed.

LIX. If a bishop or priest do not supply those things which are necessary to such of the clergy as may be in want, he shall be excommunicated; if he persevere, he shall be deposed, as one who hath slain his brother.

LX. If any one, to the detriment of the clergy and people, shall publish in the Church as holy the books of the impious, falsely inscribed (pseudepigrapha), he shall be deposed.

LXI. If any accusation of fornication, adultery, or any other prohibited action is laid against any one of the faithful, and he be convicted; he shall not be eligible among the clergy.

LXII. If any of the clergy, through worldly fear of a Jew, or a Greek, or an heretic, shall deny even the name of Christ, he shall be cast out; but if he disown the name of a clerk, he shall be deposed; yet upon having done penance, he shall be received as a laic.

LXIII. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, or any of the sacerdotal order shall eat flesh with the blood, or what has been taken by wild beasts, or that which has died by disease, he shall be deposed, because the law forbids this; but if a laic does so, he shall be excommunicated.

LXIV. If any of the clergy or a laic shall enter into a

BOOK II. synagogue of the Jews or heretics, for the purpose of  
 CHAP. V. prayer, the former shall be deposed, and the other excommunicated.

LXV. If any of the clergy, striking any one in a broil, shall kill him with one stroke, he shall be deposed, in consequence of his recklessness; but if a laic, he shall be excommunicated.

LXVI. If any of the clergy shall be found fasting on the Lord's day, or on Saturday, except on one only [i. e. Easter eve], he shall be deposed; but if a laic, he shall be excommunicated.

LXVII. If any one shall force a virgin, not betrothed, he shall be excommunicated: however, he shall not be allowed to marry another, but he shall retain her whom he hath chosen, although she be poor.

LXVIII. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, shall be reordained by any one, he shall be deposed, as also he who ordained, unless it be made apparent, that he had his ordination from heretics; because those who are baptized, or ordained by them, cannot be esteemed as of the faithful, or of the clergy.

LXIX. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, reader or chanter, do not fast during Lent, or on the fourth day, or on the preparation [i. e. Wednesday or Friday], unless he be hindered by some bodily infirmity, he shall be deposed; but if a laic, he shall be excommunicated.

LXX. If a bishop, priest, or deacon, or any of the clergy, fast with the Jews, or with them observe festival days, or receive from them gifts of the feasts, as, for example, unleavened bread, or such like, he shall be deposed; but if a laic, he shall be excommunicated.

LXXI. If any Christian shall carry oil into a temple of the Gentiles, or into a synagogue of the Jews, at any of their festivals, or shall light a lamp, he shall be excommunicated.

LXXII. If any one of the clergy or laity shall carry away from the holy Church wax or oil, he shall be deposed.

LXXIII. No one shall any more convert to his own use a golden or silver vessel, which has been consecrated, because it is unlawful. If any one shall be found so doing, he shall be punished with excommunication.

LXXIV. If a bishop be accused of any crime by credible

men, it is necessary that he be cited by the bishops, and if he come forward and confess, being convicted, punishment shall be awarded; but if, having been cited, he do not appear, he shall be summoned a second time, two bishops having been sent to him; but if he still continue disobedient, and he be called the third time, two bishops shall again be sent to him; and if he still despise the citation, and do not appear, the synod shall declare what seems fitting against him, lest he should appear to reap advantage by avoiding judgment.

LXXV. A heretic shall not be admitted as witness against a bishop, nor one only of the faithful; for "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

LXXVI. It is not becoming a bishop to gratify a brother, a son, or a relative, by ordaining to the episcopate whom, out of human affection, they wish. It is not just to make heirs to the episcopate, bestowing those things which belong to God. Neither should the Church of God be made hereditary. If any one shall do this, his ordination shall be void, and he punished with excommunication.

LXXVII. Whoever shall be considered worthy of the episcopate, although blind of an eye, or lame of a leg, shall yet become a bishop; for it is not a hurt of the body that defiles him, but the pollution of the mind.

LXXVIII. He who is deaf and blind shall not be made a bishop; not that he is polluted, but lest ecclesiastical rites be hindered.

LXXIX. If any one have a devil, he cannot be of the clergy, neither shall he pray with the faithful; but having been cured, he may be received, and if worthy, shall become of the clergy.

LXXX. It is not right that he who has turned from the way of the Gentiles, or from a wicked course of life, and hath been baptized, should immediately be made a bishop; for it is unjust that he who has not as yet given proof of his own experience should become a ruler of others, unless it be done by Divine grace.

LXXXI. We decree, that it does not become a bishop or priest to busy himself with public affairs, but to be conversant with those belonging to the Church; either he shall be persuaded to do this, or he shall be deposed; because

BOOK II. no man can serve two masters, according to the precept of  
 CHAP. V. the Lord.

LXXXII. We do not allow slaves to be ordained, to the detriment of their possessors, without the consent of their masters, because that would occasion trouble; but whenever a slave, who may be chosen to that dignity, shall appear worthy, like as did our Onesimus, and the master shall agree, and manumit, and send him from their houses, it shall be done.

LXXXIII. A bishop, priest, or deacon, engaged in the army, and wishful to retain both offices, to wit, the Roman magistracy, and the sacerdotal administration, shall be deposed; because, "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

LXXXIV. Whoever, contrary to what is just, shall behave contumaciously towards the king or prince, shall suffer punishment; and if he be of the clergy, he shall be deposed, but if of the laity, he shall be excommunicated.

LXXXV. By all of you, both clergy and laity, the following books are to be revered and esteemed holy:—Of the Old Testament, five of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; one of Jesus, son of Nave, one of Judges, one of Ruth; of Kings four; Paralipomenon, that is, of the Book of the Days, two, of Esdras two, of Esther one, of Judith one, of Maccabees three, of Job one, of the Psalter one, of Solomon three books, viz. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles; of the twelve Prophets, one of Isaiah, one of Jeremiah, one of Ezekiel, one of Daniel. Besides these, you should understand, that your young men should learn the Wisdom of the most learned son of Sirach. Of ours, that is, of the New Testament:—Evangelists four, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; of Paul's Epistles fourteen, of Peter's two, of John's three, of James one, Jude one; of Clement, two Epistles, and the Constitutiones, edited by me Clement, in eight books, for you bishops, which are not made known to all on account of the mystical writings in them, and the Acts of us, the Apostles.

## ABSTRACT

OF A

### DISSERTATION ON THE APOSTOLICAL CANONS,

BY

OTTO CARSTEN KRABBE.

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THE last writer who has discussed the authenticity, genuineness, and value of the Apostolical canons, is Otto Carsten Krabbe, of Hamburg. It may be useful, to the ulterior objects which I have in view, to submit to the reader a brief analysis of his labours<sup>1</sup>, in conjunction with the conclusions to which I have myself arrived, with respect to the dates and nature of these early rules of the universal Church. Krabbe justly remarks, that when many writings, by which papal influence was supported and extended, were found to be different from what they had been declared, the authority of Rome became more and more weakened and diminished; and when it was proved, by the most powerful reasons, that the canons which had been so long asserted to be derived from the Apostles, through Clement, were neither written by the Apostles nor by Clement; the presumption with which Rome had dazzled the Churches lost its overpowering influence. Yet when nearly all theologians unanimously disclaimed the Apostolic origin of this collection of canons, still all were satisfied that they deserved the highest consideration from the evidences which they present of unquestionable antiquity; and all, therefore, were studious to ascertain why

BOOK II.  
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<sup>1</sup> The book is rare in England. I procured a copy with difficulty.

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they were distinguished by the title *Apostolical*, and by whom they had been collected.

The Magdeburg Centuriators were the first who contended that they were not the work of the Apostles<sup>2</sup>, while Turrianus<sup>3</sup> and Binius<sup>4</sup> defended them as such. Dallæus, reputed one of the most learned men of his age, at length overthrew the arguments by which the advocates of the Apostolic origin of the canons supported their opinions. He also successfully refuted Albaspinæus, who affirmed them to be decrees of councils of the Greek bishops prior to the Council of Nice, and his opinion was that they began to be first known about the end of the fifth century<sup>5</sup>. Although the entire collection, consisting of eighty-five, are received by the Greek Church, Dionysius Exiguus, in his code, inserted only the first fifty. Bellarmine<sup>6</sup> and Baronius<sup>7</sup> admit therefore only these. Natalis Alexander<sup>8</sup>, Antonius Pagi<sup>9</sup>, Cabassutius<sup>1</sup>, and others, embraced the opinion of Dallæus. Many adopted a middle course, and contended, that though not of Apostolic origin, these canons were most ancient. Peter de Marca<sup>2</sup>, from the fact that neither Firmilian and Cyprian, in discussing the subject of the baptism of heretics with Stephen, mentioned these canons, conjectured that they were honoured with the title of Apostolical in the year 250, at a synod held at Iconium. As the forty-sixth, forty-seventh, and sixty-eighth canons of this collection disapprove of the baptism of heretics, this argument of Marca is worthy of consideration, supported also as it is by other evidences.

Beveridge<sup>3</sup>, who investigated the character of these canons

<sup>2</sup> Centur. Magdeb. i. lib. ii. cap. vii. p. 544, et seqq.

<sup>3</sup> In a work defending the Apostolical canons and epistolary decrees against the Magdeburgs, printed Venet. 1563, and Antw. 1578, the same opinion was held by Bzovius and Serarius, and in our own country the authority of both the canons and constitutions of the Apostles has been asserted by William Whiston, 8vo, 1711.

<sup>4</sup> Severinus Binius, in his Preface to the Apostolical Canons, as contained in the first volume of his edition of the councils, recognizes, as genuine and Apostolical, all the canons, with the exception of the sixty-fifth and eighty-

fourth, which two he desires to have expunged.

<sup>5</sup> De Pseudepigr. Apostol. lib. i. and ii.

<sup>6</sup> Bellarm. De Script. Eccles. pp. 40, 41, edit. Colon. 1657.

<sup>7</sup> Baron. ad an. D. 102, § 12.

<sup>8</sup> Dissert. xvii. seculi i. p. 195.

<sup>9</sup> Ad. A. C. 56, p. 46.

<sup>1</sup> In Notit. Eccles. Hist. Concil. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii, lib. iii. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Code of canons of the primitive Church, vindicated and illustrated, London, 1678. "According to that common rule of Austin, 'Things that were generally in use, and no certain

with great discrimination and judgment, concludes his task with the opinion, that they are the most ancient canons of the Christian Church; and that they were agreed upon by Apostolical men at the end of the second century, or at the beginning of the third. From the last canon he, moreover, came to the opinion, that both the canons and institutions were collected by Clement of Alexandria, and not by Clement of Rome. Krabbe, in most points, agrees with Beveridge, but dissents from him in some particulars, in consequence of considering that the clause at the end of the last canon, was inserted at a later time, by some different hand from that, by which the code was compiled.

We are now brought to the opinions of more modern authors.—Spittler<sup>4</sup>, in his History of the External Rites of the Church, laid it down as a point satisfactorily ascertained, that these canons proceeded in the first ages from the several Churches which claimed an Apostolic origin; and that, for this reason, and not because the Apostles were the authors of the canons, any injunction resulting from an Apostolic Church was dignified by the name of an Apostolic canon; as being agreeable to the doctrine of the Apostles. Lastly, he gave it as his opinion, that the several canons dispersed everywhere amongst the Apostolical Churches were gathered into one collection; but were amplified in various

author assigned to them, were attributed to the Apostles.' Two things, therefore, I shall lay down for reconciling Jerome to himself. The first is, the difference between *traditio Apostolica* and *traditio Apostolorum*. The latter doth, indeed, imply the thing spoken of to have proceeded from the Apostles themselves; but the former may be applied to what was in practice after the Apostles' times; and the reason of it is, that whatever was done in the primitive Church, supposed to be agreeable to the Apostolical practice, was called *Apostolic*. Thence the bishop's see was called *sedes Apostolica*, as Tertullian tells us, *ob consanguinitatem doctrinae*. So Sidonius Apollinaris calls the see of Lupus, the bishopric of Tricassium in France, *sedem Apostolicam*; and the bishops of the Church were called *virī Apostolici*. Hence the Constitutions, which go under the Apostles' names, were so called, saith

Albaspinseus, "ab antiquitate: nam cum eorum aliquot ab Apostolorum successoribus (qui, teste Tertulliano, Apostolici viri nominabantur) facti essent, Apostolicorum primum canones, deinde nonnullorum Latinorum ignorantia, aliquot literarum detractatione, Apostolorum dicti sunt." By which we see, that whatever was conceived to be of any great antiquity in the Church, though it was not thought to have come from the Apostles themselves, yet it was called *Apostolical*; so, in that sense, *traditio Apostolica* is no more than *traditio antiqua*, or *ab Apostolicis viris profecta*, which was meant rather of those that were conceived to succeed the Apostles, than of the Apostles themselves."—Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, part ii. p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> Spittler, Geschichte des kanonischen bis auf die Zeiten des falschen Isidore. Halle, 1778.

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ways at subsequent periods. This opinion gained belief among the more recent enquirers, and it was judged by the most competent scholars that the date of the canons was referred to the second and third centuries<sup>5</sup>, and that additions had been made to them which might be rightly detected.

These remarks lead to the conclusion, that the learned have not agreed among themselves as to the number of the canons belonging to the genuine collection. To institute an inquiry into the number and authority of them, therefore, is the first thing required; and by making common principles of investigation the guide, which, taken in connexion with the internal evidences each supplies, as well as the opinions of the most judicious critics, Krabbe imagined the origin of the several canons might be satisfactorily settled.

Among the Greeks, John of Antioch was the first who included the whole eighty-five in the code of sacred writings; and since the second canon of the Trullan Council<sup>6</sup> pronounced favourably of their authenticity; and John of Damascus<sup>7</sup> afterwards received them into the catalogue of sacred writings, their authority became established among the Greeks. The learned Photius<sup>8</sup> was the first who threw a doubt on their being real writings of the Apostles, but still the eighty-five were regarded by the Eastern Churches as sacred. In the Latin Church the case was different. Dionysius Exiguus having translated only the first fifty in his code, the Church of Rome has consequently rejected the last twenty-five. The first fifty have frequently been appealed to by bishops of Rome in support of their measures; and it does not appear that any express reasons have ever been assigned for the total exclusion of the remainder. Cardinal Humbert, in disputing with Nicetas Pectoratus on the Sabbath, pronounces the last thirty-five to be apocryphal; and Gratian, also, has inserted canons to the same effect<sup>9</sup>, but on what ground does not appear.

<sup>5</sup> See Walter, in *Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechts*, sec. 39, s. 96, 3te, Augsb.

<sup>6</sup> "It hath appeared also most proper and excellent to this holy synod, that the eighty-five canons which were made by the holy and honourable Apostles before us, shall remain established and secure even from the pre-

sent time"

<sup>7</sup> *De Fid. Orthod.* lib. iv. c. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Photius, *Biblioth. Cod.* 112. He speaks of "the canons called those of the holy Apostles, although some persons, for certain reasons, have considered them doubtful."

<sup>9</sup> Gratian, *Dist.* xvi. *Præf. et Ur-*

The testimonies of the ancients, as well as an examination of the canons themselves, will sufficiently prove that they did not all proceed from one source; and very often in the fourth and later centuries, when the most ancient canons are cited, they are described by various names. To come, therefore, to a more decided opinion as to their origin, the arguments of Krabbe will be useful.

The Council of Chalcedon, held in 451, declared in canon thirty-two, that "after the death of a bishop it was not lawful for the clergy to seize upon the property which belonged to him," to which are subjoined the following words, "as also is forbidden in the ancient canons<sup>1</sup>," as if to give additional weight to their own canon. Now there is no canon known besides the fortieth Apostolical canon, which expressly provides that a bishop may leave his private property to whomsoever he will; it is, therefore, to be inferred, that this canon was pointed at by the synod of Constantinople. It may be further noticed, that the "Apostolical canons" were named at the synod of Constantinople in the year 394, by Zonaras, and by Balsamon; Theophilus of Alexandria, Flavius of Antioch, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore of Mopsuesta, and many other men of note being present. Letters were sent, also, by the œcumenical synod held in 381, to Damasus, Ambrose, and other bishops, at that time assembled in Rome, in which they contended that it ought to be determined by the old canon—"both the old canon and the fathers at Nice, as ye well know, commanded it." The point was, that bishops in their own dioceses should, together with other neighbouring bishops, if such should seem fit to them, confer ordination on the clergy; and this is conformable to the fourteenth and fifteenth Apostolical canons, and no others older than the Nicene synod.

Evagrius, about the year 381, was consecrated to the see of Antioch by Paulinus, his predecessor, without another bishop being present. Theodoret quotes, in general terms, the canons, to prove the unlawfulness of such ordination<sup>2</sup>, and the words of the canons to which he refers are the very

banus II. apud Gratian, Dist. xxxii. c. 6.

<sup>1</sup> καθὼς καὶ τοῖς πάλαι κανόσιν ἀπηγόρευται, can. xxii. ap. Bruns, i.

31. See Turrian, lib. i. cap. xiv. for the argument on this head.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. v. c. 23.

words of the first and sixty-sixth Apostolic canons. It is, therefore, evident that Theodoret was acquainted with these ancient canons. Upon further enquiry, also, it is no less clear, when Alexander, in a letter, reproached certain bishops who had received into their communion a number of persons under excommunication by him, that his reproof was founded on the twelfth and thirteenth Apostolical canons<sup>3</sup>.

The Nicene fathers, when they proposed certain canons respecting self-mutilation<sup>4</sup>, referred to the former canons of the Church, and the canons to which they alluded could have been no other than the twenty-first and twenty-second of these earlier canons. With regard to apostacy, also, by the clergy, the Nicene synod decreed the same punishment as the sixty-second Apostolical canon orders. By the synod of Antioch, moreover, in the year 341, these canons are mentioned, and called "the ecclesiastical laws, and a more ancient canon enacted by our forefathers<sup>5</sup>."

Athanasius attempted to prove that his own deposition, which had been effected by the Arians, against whom he had contended, was illegal. His plea is, that he had been deprived without having been called before a synod, and by the mere accusation of his adversaries, contrary to a settled canon of the Church, made to prevent such injustice; and the seventy-fourth Apostolical canon is expressly to the effect that Athanasius declares. Indeed, he has in many places spoken with praise of the ecclesiastical canons, and all he says is agreeable to the description of these of which we are speaking.

Eusebius, when invited to the episcopal dignity, and Constantine, in a letter which he wrote in approbation of his conduct, referred to the fourteenth Apostolical canon, not to its number in the code, but to its contents and authority<sup>6</sup>.

If we recur to the testimony of the Latin Church, we find that Julius, Bishop of Rome, appealed to the Apostolic

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret, lib. i. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Id. *ibid.* See the Nicene canons xii. and xiii., which compare with xxi. xxii. xxiii. of the Apostolical code.

<sup>5</sup> Bruns, Canon. i. 80.

<sup>6</sup> "The canon of ecclesiastical dis-

cipline has been faithfully kept, and it was very right faithfully to adhere to those things which are both pleasing to God, and are evidently consonant with ecclesiastical tradition."—Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. c. 61.

canons against the Oriental bishops when they deposed Athanasius. Julius, however, might have referred to them, not to prove their general authority, but to point out their inconsistency<sup>7</sup>.

Gelasius was Bishop of Rome in 494. He is said to have placed the Apostolic canons among the apocryphal books. This decree, however, is most uncertain. The words are wanting in the MSS. used by Justellus and others. Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims, contended, in the ninth century, that the Apostolical canons were not mentioned in the decree of Gelasius. They were, however, generally rejected by the Latin Church<sup>8</sup>. They are, consequently, excluded from the collection of canons by Martin of Bracara, Ferrandus, and others, though they were subsequently admitted into the canon law.

The general conclusion to which we may arrive, then, is this, that in the primitive Church, separate canons under the names of "ancient canons," "Apostolical canons," "ecclesiastical laws," and "ancient decrees," were circulated; and each of these canons, although framed and sanctioned in later times, was ascribed to the Apostles, if it appeared to be in accordance with their doctrine. These canons, therefore, were called Apostolical, not from having been written by the Apostles, but from their agreement with their doctrine. In the primitive Church, too, there were a great number of Churches or dioceses, to which greater authority and principality were ascribed, because they had derived their origin from the Apostles. These were called Apostolical Churches. We may conclude, therefore, that all the canons were made according to circumstances, in the several Churches of the first ages, until the canons, dispersed some here, some there, were gathered into one collection.

Let us briefly consider the date of the origin of each. In

<sup>7</sup> "Nihilominus autem ex hac re concludere non possumus, canones in ecclesia occidentali valuisse. Probabiliter demonstraret, non legitime ab iis contra Athanasium esse actum."—Krabbe, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Pearson's *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, i. c. 4; Beveridge, *Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Primitivæ Vindicatus*, lib. i. c. ix.

Canones qui dicuntur Apostolorum . . . nec sedes Apostolica recepit, nec sanctissimi patres illis assensum præbuerunt, pro eo, quod ab hæreticis sub nomine Apostolorum compositi dignoscantur, quamvis in iis utilia inveniantur.—Isidor. Hispal. ap. Anton. Augustin. lib. i. de emendat. Gratiani, dist. vi. ; Gratiani Digest. xvi. c. i. as cited in a note by Krabbe.

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the times of the Apostles, the Christian teachers who ruled the Church were called Apostles. The words "presbyter" and "bishop" were assigned indiscriminately to the persons next to them in rank and order. The power of ruling was continued for the common benefit, and the names or titles of rulers were bishops, and not presbyters. The first and second canons were made after this distinction was known. They speak of a presbyter as ordained by a bishop. They mention also the rest of the clergy. Now Tertullian is the first of all the ecclesiastical writers who has mentioned the inferior ranks<sup>9</sup>; it follows, therefore, that these canons are to be assigned to the end of the second century.

The third, fourth, and fifth canons were enacted in the third century. They refer to the custom of offering first fruits, which were distributed by the bishops to the poor. Origen mentions the fact as being common in his time<sup>1</sup>. The power of the bishops had increased, and the Jewish custom was partially adopted in the Christian Church.

The sixth and seventh canons were probably rejected by the Western Church, because they permit, by implication, the marriage of the clergy. They agree with the doctrine of the Apostles on this point, and command that the clergy shall not put away their wives under the pretext of religion, and also that they shall abstain from secular pursuits. They are probably of the most remote antiquity.

The eighth canon forbids the celebration of the passover, by the Christians, in company with the Jews. The canon appears to have resulted from the controversies on the celebration of Easter at the end of the second century. The Christian Church consisted, at the beginning, of one mingled society of Jews and Gentiles. The differences of opinion on the right time of celebrating Easter arose gradually in the Churches, and for a long time did not prevent intercommunion, as in the case of Victor and Polycrates.

The ninth and tenth canons must be assigned to the end of the second century. They command the receiving of the

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hæretic.* c. xli.

<sup>1</sup> Celsus, indeed, wishes, says Origen, to offer up prayers to devils; but we to Him who said, "Let the earth bring forth herbs abundantly," to Him we

offer up the first fruits, and also address our prayers, having a great High Priest, who hath traversed the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.—*Contra Celsum*, lib. viii. p. 400, edit. Cantabrig.

Eucharist by all the faithful, both clergy and laity. Justin Martyr, in his celebrated letter to Antoninus Pius, mentions this as a general custom. The non-reception of the sacrament, by many of the worshippers, was not yet known.

The eleventh and twelfth canons bear internal marks of remote antiquity. They command the suspension of the immoral from communion.

The thirteenth may have originated in the third century. It refers to the commendatory letters which were granted by the bishops to those who desired to remove from one diocese to another.

The fourteenth to the twentieth may be all referred to the Apostolic age as wise and good laws.

The twenty-first to the twenty-fourth refer to the self-mutilation which was practised to preserve chastity. They were probably enacted between the time of Origen, who was guilty of this perversion of the precept of Christ, and the Council of Nice.

The twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth may be justly assigned to the Apostolic age as good and useful.

The twenty-seventh refers to the inferior clergy, and was probably therefore of the age of Tertullian.

The twenty-eighth coincides with, and seems founded upon, 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7, and it may therefore be Apostolical.

The twenty-ninth is passed over by Krabbe without any remark. It enacts, that bishop, priest, or deacon, obtaining his dignity for money, be cut off from communion, as Simon Magus was, and is therefore entitled to rank with the laws of the Apostolic age.

The thirtieth to the thirty-fourth are probably assignable to the middle of the third century. They reject from the episcopal office those who have held secular functions.

The thirty-fifth enjoins subjection to the chief bishop of the province. The title of metropolitan or archbishop had not come into use when this canon was enacted, and it prescribes that no bishop shall meddle with things that do not concern his own *parish*. Hence the term *parish* then implied *diocese*<sup>2</sup>. The date of the canon must be early

<sup>2</sup> The antiquity of the thirty-fifth canon has been impugned by Daillé,

BOOK II. in the third century. Krabbe omits this and the four  
CHAP. V. following.

The thirty-sixth forbids bishops to ordain out of their own sees without the consent of those to whom the sees belong, and is probably the original from which the sixteenth Nicene was framed.

The thirty-seventh orders, that bishops shall, upon ordination, consent to receive the "Liturgy," and take due care of the congregations within their charge. It also provides for the rejection of the bishop by the people of the province, and may be ascribed to the third century.

The thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth enact, the *former*, that provincial synods shall be held twice a year; and the *latter*, that the property of the Church shall be committed in trust to the bishop<sup>3</sup>, who shall be answerable for its due distribution; and it seems to have been made after Churches became possessed of regular revenues, therefore it may have been added at a later period than most others.

The fortieth and forty-first were the offspring of the third century. They ordain, that presbyters and deacons do nothing without the bishop, and that all private property of the bishop belong to his heirs. Church property had not become vested to much extent before the third century.

The forty-second and forty-third order the depositions of bishops, priests, deacons, or any other of the clergy, who spend their time in a manner unworthy of their profession, and are not at all contrary to Apostolical discipline.

The forty-fourth and forty-fifth forbid bishops and clergy to demand usury, and to receive baptism from heretics, and are conformable to the Apostolic age.

The forty-sixth, forty-seventh, and forty-eighth, are all concerning the baptism of heretics, and were consequently enacted after the great controversy on that subject.

because it defends the privileges of the metropolitans. Krabbe offers reasons, however, to show that this is no argument, for though no trace of metropolitan bishops be found in the authentic and genuine remains of the Apostles, yet great force and weight is to be allowed to the fact, that the Nicene synod, in its fifth canon, has denominated the right of the metropolitans "*ancient usages*," and that

synod made no new regulations, but *enjoined only that the customs of antiquity be observed.*

<sup>3</sup> There is nothing in the thirty-eighth by which it may be denied an origin coeval with the Apostolic age; but the thirty-ninth must have been of a date subsequent to the Churches having become possessed of revenues, and this was not the case till an advanced period of the third century.

The forty-ninth and fiftieth command that baptism be administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and condemn the custom of the Eunomian heretics mentioned by Socrates<sup>4</sup>, whose form was, "I baptize thee into the death of Christ." Their date is consequently after that heresy.

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Let us now consider the authority, arising from their antiquity, of the last thirty-five of the reputed Apostolical canons, rejected by the Church of Rome.

The fifty-first, the fifty-third, and the eight following, may be assigned to the earliest period.

The fifty-second and sixty-second command the reception of penitents, they were consequently enacted against the errors of Novatian.

The sixty-third, sixty-fifth, sixty-sixth, sixty-seventh, seventieth, seventy-first, and seventy-second, contain nothing inconsistent with the belief that they were of the earliest, or of Apostolical origin. This cannot be said of the sixty-fourth, which commands, that no one fast on the Lord's day, or on any Sabbath day but that which precedes the passover. Tertullian<sup>5</sup> affirms, that this custom prevailed in his day. Epiphanius also, in the fourth century, declares it to have been common in the third century, both among the Montanists and among the faithful themselves. The seventieth canon refers to Lent. This canon, therefore, says Krabbe, must be dated in the third century. Jerome, however, and Augustine, with others, would assign the origin of this fast to the Apostles<sup>6</sup>.

The seventy-third canon is probably of later date. It forbids the appropriation, by the Church officers, to domestic purposes<sup>7</sup>, of the gold and silver vessels, or consecrated cloth. These were later gifts to the Churches. The date of the canon may be the beginning of the third century.

There is nothing in the canons which follow, as far as the seventy-fourth, to indicate any thing against their early origin. The seventy-third, however, seems to have been dated after the deposition of Paul of Samosata, by the

<sup>4</sup> Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 24.

<sup>5</sup> De Coron. Milit. c. iii.

<sup>6</sup> See on this point the Treatise on Lent, by Bishop Hooper, and Gunning

on the same subject, p. 48, edit. Oxf. 1845.

<sup>7</sup> εἰς οἰκίαν χρῆσιν.

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Council of Antioch. It also condemns the bishop who has held office under the Roman magistracy.

The last canon is evidently to be dated after the termination of the fourth century. It declares the two Epistles of Clement, and the Constitutions, to be Apostolical.

We therefore infer, as we have said, that the eighty-five canons affirmed to be Apostolical, were enacted in the Apostolic Churches at various periods; and subsequently to the fourth century were reduced to the code which we now possess.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Policy of Constantine continued by Theodosius the Great.  
First Council of Constantinople.*

A PERIOD of fifty-six years elapsed between the Council of Nice and the second general council held at Constantinople; the empire in the mean time having fallen under the dominion of Constantine II., Constantius II., Constans, Julian the Apostate, Jovian, Valentinian, Gratian, Valentinian II., Valens, and Theodosius the Great. All of these, whether orthodox in their faith or otherwise, may be said to have pursued the policy of Constantine, in enforcing the observance of the canons of the Church by the civil law. As some notice will be taken of the reign of each of these emperors in connexion with subsequent observations on the extinction of paganism; only a few remarkable occurrences during the interval, which seem more appropriate in the present place, may here be cursorily mentioned.—In the East a new metropolitan city had been built by Constantine, and named after him Constantinople, which, in the year 330, was made the seat of empire. The jurisdiction of the see of Constantinople was rapidly extended in Europe and Asia, and its bishops were acknowledged second in precedence; the primate of Rome, from that city having been the ancient imperial residence, being honoured as “head of the Church.” At this time the incomes of Churches were committed to the management of deacons and sub-deacons; but all distributions of these revenues were dispensed at the discretion of each bishop, for the maintenance of the clergy of his diocese, and for alms. Many circumstances, also, contributed during this age to the diffusion of the Gospel, which

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had spread eastward into Persia<sup>1</sup> and India, and westward into Iberia; also, according to some, it had found its way into Britain and Ireland; and when it is considered that the first Christian emperor was proclaimed in Britain, it is fair to presume that he would desire to propagate his own religion in this part of his empire.

The divisions in the Church, caused by new metaphysical theories, as well as by the rancour and malevolence exhibited against the defenders of the Nicene faith, by the heterodox disciples of those of the preceding ages who were authors of anti-Nicene doctrines, had, at this time, proved exceedingly baneful to the Church. The plausibilities and courtly intrigues of the Arians were successful in gaining over Constantius to favour their cause. The disputes on controverted and mysterious points increased in virulence, the further they were carried on; while abilities and learning were thrown away on both sides, without bringing the inscrutable questions in dispute nearer to a settlement. Athanasius signalized himself more, perhaps, than any other antagonist of the Arian heresy; and the refutations which the theorists suffered from the unanswerable truths and exposures of his pen, made him a distinguished object of their implacable revenge. Through their undivided favour with the emperor, and the calumnies to which they had recourse, together with the denunciations of synods partially convened, the Arians succeeded in obtaining a sentence of banishment against their pious and vigorous adversary, who,

<sup>1</sup> In the year 343, according to Baronius, but more correctly, 349, Sapor, King of Persia, sent ambassadors to Constantine the Great, to negotiate a treaty of alliance, when Constantine took occasion to write to that king, entreating him to grant protection to the Christians in his dominions. Nevertheless, the magi raised a persecution against them, by accusing Simeon, Archbishop of Lebucia, with favouring the Romans, who were then at war with Persia; whereupon Sapor burthened them with insupportable taxes, and ordered their priests and ministers to be beheaded, their churches to be demolished, and their property confiscated. He ordered Simeon, also, to be taken into custody,

as a traitor to the state and religion of the Persians. These orders were executed, and Simeon was brought before the king in irons. He was commanded to worship the Sun, which he refused, and was condemned to death with many other Christians. An edict was published in the following year, by which all the Christians in Persia were condemned to death; and great numbers perished, together with all the bishops and heads of Churches, and the persecution was continued by his successors with more or less severity, till the year 399.—Sozomen's Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 8—15; Socrates, lib. vii. c. 8; Pagi, Crit. ad Baron. A. D. 343, § 3.

after several expulsions from his see, and alternate restorations, died at last in the enjoyment of his honours, in the year 372<sup>2</sup>.

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Another sect, whose history belongs rather to this than the ensuing period, originated from the peculiar opinions of Priscillian, a Spanish bishop, whose character is given by Sulpitius with his usual spirit and brilliancy of style<sup>3</sup>. He is said to have been a man of great learning and eloquence, endowed with vast powers of body and mind; who, by assumed modesty and gravity, was calculated to gain ascendancy over ordinary capacities. Idacius, an aged presbyter, in conjunction with Ithacius, Bishop of Sossuba (a doubtful locality), accused him, before a council at Saragossa, in 380, with being a teacher of Manichæan doctrines, and obtained his condemnation; but the death of Gratian prevented the rescript for his banishment being put in force, and he was again restored to his see for a short time. His accusers then urged the civil power, that the heresiarch might be expelled from the cities of Spain, which had generally become infected with his errors; and the magistrates issued their decrees accordingly. Upon this the Priscillianists sought protection in Italy, and prayed to be heard in their own defence before Damasus, Bishop of Rome; they appealed, also, to Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for the same privilege, and in both these cases their suit was rejected. Maximus, the usurper, at the death of Gratian, entered Treves at the head of his forces; and Ithacius immediately sought to obtain his decree against the heretics. Priscillian also appealed to the same authority, and Maximus took upon himself the office of judge in the case. The heretics were accused of spreading opinions opposed to Christianity, and they were declared guilty, and condemned by the emperor. Martin, Bishop of Tours, interposed, and implored Maximus to spare the lives of the victims. He reminded Maximus that since they stood expelled from the Churches by the sentence of ecclesiastical councils, it was a new and unknown evil for a secular judge to undertake to decide cases purely

<sup>2</sup> The true date of this event is determined by Pagi, after much discussion, A.D. 372, § 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sulpitius Severus, p. 419. See also

Waddington's History of the Church, pp. 174, 175; Dupin, Eccl. Disc. p. 162.

spiritual. This interference in behalf of the lives of the condemned party was ineffectual, and Priscillian, with several of his deluded adherents, suffered death at Treves in the year 384<sup>4</sup>. It has not been satisfactorily shown what the precise opinions of this sect were; but, not consuming the Eucharist, omission of fasts, the enjoining of celibacy, and making perjury, in times of persecution, a pardonable crime, are stated to have been errors of which they were guilty. Whatever may have been his offence, Priscillian is deemed the first martyr to sectarian opinions under the operation of the system which resulted from the measures of Constantine.

Another heresy, which had birth at this time, requires, also, brief notice, on account of the eminent source whence it sprang. Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, had obtained high repute among the orthodox, from a work of great merit which he had written against Porphyry and Julian. Among his particular friends and admirers are mentioned, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Jerome, and others of his contemporaries, who were celebrated for having employed their high learning in vindication of truth. In accounting for the erroneous opinions of Apollinaris, it has been imagined, that his extreme objections to Arianism led him astray so far on the opposite side, as to deny that Christ participated in any thing human; that the Divine logos supplied in him the spiritual essence of human intellect, that it was, indeed, an entire and perfect substitute for the soul. From the confidence which his known talents had created, this idea was received with approbation by many Churches of Egypt; but throughout the Asiatic provinces and the West, it met with unanimous condemnation.

Though the reign of Julian occupied scarcely two years<sup>5</sup> of the interval before us, it was wholly spent in hostility to the Christians, in depositions and banishment of the orthodox, in proscriptions, confiscations, and ruinous exactions; in imprisonments, scourgings, and heartless cruelties, all inflicted and encouraged under a pretended love of justice, and a professed hatred of persecution.

<sup>4</sup> See Pagi, A.D. 381, § 14.

<sup>5</sup> On the duration of his reign, see Pagi, A.D. 361, § 5.

When the soldiery by their acclamations saluted Jovian as emperor, he plainly told them that “he was a Christian, and could not hope for Divine protection, or the success of their arms, were he to take the command of men trained up in the principles of the late emperor Julian.” The soldiers replied, “You shall command Christians. The oldest of us were trained by Constantine, the next by Constantius, and the reign of Julian has been too short to bind any men among us to his persuasions<sup>6</sup>.” Upon this he assumed the government of the empire, and immediately wrote to the governors of the provinces commanding them to open the churches, and diligently to attend divine worship. He ordered the Nicene canons to be observed; he restored to the clergy and the churches the gifts, revenues, and privileges, which his predecessor had confiscated and abolished; and recalled the bishops and other exiles from banishment<sup>7</sup>. Though Christianity alone was publicly to be practised, by an edict which he issued; all had liberty to worship God in whatever way they pleased in their private devotions. His reign was only eight months. At his death, the army mustered in Nice, and made choice of Valentinian as the emperor elect. He had been formerly a tribune of the people, and had signalized himself by his intrepidity; but had incurred the enmity of Julian, by whom he was banished, for his attachment to Christianity. On the accession of Jovian, he returned from exile, and was living in Ancyra, to which city messengers were despatched to conduct him to Nice; where, on his arrival, the army proclaimed him emperor. At the same time it was proposed to him to choose a colleague to govern jointly with him, to which he, at first, replied, “Your power made me emperor; it is now mine to command<sup>8</sup>.” Within a month, however, he placed his brother Valens upon the throne of the East, and from that time the empire became partitioned. Of the character and religious sentiments of Valens, it is only necessary to say, in this place, that the upholders of the orthodox principles, as settled by the Nicene synod, were made the victims

<sup>6</sup> Theodoret, Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 4; Socrates, lib. iii. c. 24.

c. 1. Also Socrates' Hist. lib. iii. c. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Socrates, lib. iv. c. 1; Sozomen, lib. vi. c. 6; Theodoret, lib. iv. c. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. lib. iv.

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of insult, indignity, oppression, and violence, at the instigation of Arian emissaries; throughout the fifteen years of his government, as far as his sway extended.

After it had been thought expedient to divide the empire into two imperial realms, it was found necessary, also, to make fresh arrangements in the ecclesiastical departments; corresponding to those which had been made in the civil departments. In the Western empire, there were two prefectures, Italy and Gaul, and seven dioceses, four of which were in the former prefecture, and three in the latter. In the Eastern there were, likewise, two prefectures, Illyricum and the East, and seven dioceses, two in the former, and five in the latter. The rank of the several Churches, and the dignity and order of the bishops within each prefecture, was according to that assigned to each of the cities over which they presided. Rome was first in civil rank, as the ancient metropolis of the empire; it, therefore, stood first in its ecclesiastical degree. To Constantinople, as the newer seat of empire, was assigned the next degree of episcopal rank; to Alexandria the third, to Antioch the fourth, which four became afterwards patriarchal sees. The Bishop of Jerusalem ranked, by courtesy, as a metropolitan, but remained subject to the Bishop of Cæsarea; and these arrangements were sanctioned by the canons<sup>9</sup>. Presiding, consecrating, ordaining, receiving penitents, and mitigating penalties imposed on offenders within their respective jurisdictions, were all unquestioned rights with which the bishops of this age were empowered. Besides metropolitans and bishops, the orders of ecclesiastics comprised, at this time, presbyters, deacons, sub-deacons, exorcists, catechists, readers, and singers. Chorepiscopi, or rural bishops, and archdeacons, are also mentioned by the authors of this period<sup>1</sup>.

On the death of Valens, in the year 379, Gratian, who had then reigned twelve years over the Western empire, wisely determined, in consequence of the endless irruptions of the Goths, (his brother, Valentinian, being only ten years old,) to appoint an experienced and judicious person to take part with him in the government of the Eastern world.

<sup>9</sup> Spanheim's *Ecclesiastical Annals*,  
by Wright, p. 302.

<sup>1</sup> Spanheim, *ut supra*; Gieseler, i.  
250—255.

Theodosius, a Spaniard, who had given abundant proof of valour and prudence, was fixed upon, and the choice was generally approved. He was forty-three years of age when he was called to Sirmium, and invested with the purple, in the year 379<sup>2</sup>. The first two years of the reign of Theodosius having been chiefly occupied in clearing Thrace and other parts of the realm from the Gothic invaders, by which they were overrun, the first great act in which he made himself conspicuous in the cause of the Church, was the calling of the Council of Constantinople, in 381, to which date only the present course of observations extends; and with the transactions of which council this section will be subsequently occupied. There is, however, one incident which, as it occurred within this specified term, and serves so fully to unfold the illustrious character of the emperor, and to presage the glory of his reign, it would be injustice to omit.—Towards the end of the first year of his reign, A.D. 380, Theodosius received the sacrament of baptism from Ascolus, the orthodox Bishop of Thessalonica<sup>3</sup>; and as he ascended from the holy font, he dictated a solemn edict, which proclaimed his own faith, and prescribed the religion of his subjects. “It is our pleasure,” such is the imperial style, “that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation, should stedfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans, which faithful tradition has preserved; and which is now professed by the pontiff Damasus, and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of Apostolic holiness. According to the discipline of the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the sole Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, under an equal Majesty and sacred Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of catholic Christians; and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous name of heretics, and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches. Besides the condemnation of Divine justice, they must expect to suffer the severe

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<sup>2</sup> See Pagi, A.D. 379, § 5.

Tillemont, Hist. Emp. v. 198; Sozom.

<sup>3</sup> See the authorities collected by viii. 4; Soer. v. 6.

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CHAP. VI. shall think proper to inflict upon them <sup>4</sup>.”

The power over the Church, above that of bishops and metropolitans, was vested in councils and in the emperors. The latter, as heads of the state, were acknowledged as heads of the Church also; and, as such, they convoked synods at their pleasure, and confirmed their laws; they, moreover, ordered punishments, and appointed to dignities. Influenced, as it might happen, by secular or religious motives, they sometimes took upon themselves to decide controversies, and even to rescind decisions of synods, by declaring in favour of those who had been condemned. The party favoured by such interference was not likely to complain; those only who suffered, maintained the authority of the bishops over the Church, and denied that of the emperors <sup>5</sup>. Though dependence of this kind on the civil authority was generally objected to by the clergy, they still acknowledged the decision of the emperor to be the final appeal; and it was a boast of the Bishop of Rome that he could be judged by none other than the emperor himself <sup>6</sup>. The bishops were submissive to the imperial authority when exercised in the affairs of the Church, so long as the rights of conscience, and the doctrines of Christianity, were not infringed. Indeed Socrates, in the preface to his fifth book, says, “that from the time the emperors embraced the Christian religion, the administration of the Church devolved upon them.” Still, on the other hand, it is necessary to be borne in mind, that the care of public morals had always been confided exclusively to the clergy, which gave them power over the emperors themselves. A remarkable instance, which occurred near the time now under review, may be mentioned in proof of this authority of the spiritual over the temporal power. Soon after the advancement of Theodosius the Great to the imperial throne, he was called

<sup>4</sup> Cod. Theodos. 16, t. 1, l. 2, p. 4, 5; Sozom. viii. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Gieseler, i. 248. Also note to the same place. Leontius, Bishop of Tripoli, said to Constantius (Suidas, v. *Αιόντιος*, ii. 425, edit. Keuster), *θαυμάζω ὅπως ἑγὼ διέπειν ταχθεῖς, ἰδίους ἐπιχειρεῖς, στρατιωτικῶν μὲν*

*καὶ πολιτικῶν πραγμάτων προεστηκώς, ἐπισκόπους δὲ περὶ τῶν εἰς μόνους ἐπισκόπους ἡκόντων διατατόμενος.*

<sup>6</sup> Ut episcopus Romanus, si concilio ejus causa non creditur, apud concilium se imperiale defendat.—Sirmondi, Append. Cod. Theod. p. 78.

to account by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for having caused many inhabitants of Thessalonica to be massacred in revenge for the murder of some imperial officers which had been committed in that place; and was compelled to reconcile himself with the Church by the humiliation of public penance<sup>7</sup>.

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The disputes of the antagonistic parties on questions of a spiritual nature, were generally embarrassed with unsearchable theories; and the emperors who were desirous to maintain the orthodox faith, found great difficulty, on many occasional points, in settling with precision what opinions were orthodox and what were heretical. These were inquiries which it belonged entirely to the ecclesiastical department of the state to consider and determine; and hence appeals to synods became indispensable, in order to preserve the Apostolic institution of the Church as far as possible from innovation. Within the period which elapsed between the Nicene council and that of Constantinople, numerous important provincial meetings of this kind were held, among which are enumerated those of Gangra, Antioch, Tyre, and others. One is stated to have met at Sardica, the modern Sophia in Thrace, in 344 (or 347), by which all condemned bishops were allowed to appeal to the Bishop of Rome. Dr. Geddes has, however, submitted to the world sufficient reasons to lead us to doubt whether this council was ever held. It is said, that an ecclesiastical assembly was called at this place in 347, which resolved, that some appeals of a higher nature should be carried before the Bishop of Rome. This decree had been incorporated with the canons of the Council of Nice; but the Church of Africa denied the genuineness of this supposed Nicene canon, and Gieseler has succeeded in proving that it is an interpolation<sup>8</sup>. The laws passed by the emperors to enforce the policy of Constantine, which was to give to the canon law the force of the civil law, will be given, with a review of the Theodosian code, in a future section. I therefore now subjoin a synopsis of the second general council<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Tillem. Hist. des Emp. v. 336.

ten- u. Kirchengesch. th. i. Ulm. 1771.

<sup>8</sup> Geddes, Diss. de Sardicensibus Canon. Miscell. Tract. t. ii. p. 415; Sarpi, in Le Bret's Magazin für Staa-

<sup>9</sup> The name "œcumenical," *συνόδος οἰκουμένης*, was first used at this council.—Gieseler, vol. i. p. 241.

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COUNCIL III.—FIRST OF CONSTANTINOPLE.	
Date.	A.D. 381. First sitting about three months. Met again the next year <sup>1</sup> .
Number of Bishops.	One hundred and fifty <sup>2</sup> .
By whom summoned.	Emperor Theodosius, without the sanction of the Bishop of Rome. Repugnante Damaso celebrata fuit.—Baronius.
Presidents.	Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, of first session, during which he died <sup>3</sup> . Flavianus then became president ; afterwards, Gregory Nazianzen ; and lastly, Nectarius.
Why and against what opinions called.	To complete the theological system established at Nice. Also against the opinion, that though the Father and Son were consubstantial, yet the third person in the Trinity was not Divine and co-equal with them.
Against whom.	Macedonius and his semi-Arian followers <sup>4</sup> —Basil, of Ancyra ; Eleusis, of Cyzicum ; Eustathius, of Sebastea ; Heortius, of Sardis ; Dracontius, of Pergamus. And, in the second session, were added, Sylvanus, of Tarsus ; Sophronius, of Pompeiopolis ; Elpidius, of Satala ; Cyril, of Jerusalem.
Chief decrees and canons.	Gregory Nazianzen confirmed in the see of Constantinople. The Nicene Creed, with an addition to it, ratified, and all heretics condemned. Seven new canons established during the sessions, the first and seventh of which relate principally to heretics ; the others to episcopal discipline.
Penalties.	Anathemas against all heretics, that is, all who differ from the creed of Nice, with its additions, made at this council.
Sufferers.	Maximus deprived of his usurped bishopric, and those who had been ordained by him deposed. Macedonius and his adherents.
Emperor.	Theodosius the Great.
Pope or Bishop of Rome.	Damasus, not present, neither was he represented by legates or presbyters <sup>5</sup> .

By the canons of Nice, with the Apostolical code already given, and the critical annotations attached to them, the reader will have been put in possession of the fundamental laws and regulations by which the universal Church preserved its principles and rites free from corruption; and the following enactments of the Constantinopolitan synod complete the system of Episcopal legislature unanimously ratified and acted upon by the fathers of the first four centuries.

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*Canons of the first Council of Constantinople.*

Canon I. Confirms the creed of the Council of Nice, and adds to it the following, after the words—*Kaì εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, τὸ Κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς*

<sup>1</sup> Platina dates this council 370. The proper date is from 381 to 383, it having been prorogued through that period. Dupin makes three assemblies of bishops, one in 381, another in 382, and the last in 383. It began in May, 381, and sat till August. Cave and Newman think there were only two sittings.—Hey's Lect. vol. iv. p. 96; Newman's Arians, p. 398; Mosheim, vol. i. p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Of the one hundred and fifty bishops who attended, all agree that thirty-six came chiefly from the Hellespont, and were Macedonians.

<sup>3</sup> In consequence of a disturbance relative to the successor of Meletius in the see of Antioch, Gregory withdrew from the synod, and it broke up. Nectarius, the successor of Gregory in the see of Constantinople, afterwards presided; so that in all there were four presidents, as signified in the table. See the above-cited authorities. The second general council was celebrated under Nectarius, patriarch of Constantinople.

<sup>4</sup> Macedonius was Bishop of Constantinople—*Macedoniani sunt a Macedonio Constantinopolitanae ecclesiae episcopo, quos et Πνευματομάχους Græci dicunt, eo quod de Spiritu Sancto litigunt. Nam de Patre et Filio recte sentiunt, quod unius sint ejusdemque substantiæ vel essentiæ, sed de Spiritu Sancto hoc nolunt credere, creaturam eum esse dicentes. S. August. Hæres. 5. He was a semi-Arian, deposed*

by the synod of Constantinople, in 360, consisting of fifty bishops. They condemned Aëtius, and excommunicated three bishops who did not agree with the condemnation. This was a matter of policy to gain the emperor's favour. It was an Arian council, and they deposed those specified in the table. Many causes are assigned for these depositions, but the principal seems to have been annoyance at the opposition to treating of matters of faith before personal ones in the Council of Seleucia, the year before.—Dupin, vol. i. p. 265.

Macedonius was sent into exile, and formed the sect of the Macedonians, called also *Pneumatomachians*. This heresy was condemned, first by the Council of Alexandria, A.D. 362; afterwards by those of Rome, 370; 378 or 379; and lastly at Constantinople, in 383.

<sup>5</sup> Bellarmine, on this occasion, confesseth, that neither the pope nor his legates were present, but that Nectarius was president; *eryo*, by his own confession, the pope was not president in this council. And whereas, he saith, the emperor was not president, it is contrary to their own decrees, (Dec. part. i. dist. xv. c. 2.) Gelasius, affirmeth that the second general council was held at Constantinople, *mediante Theodosio seniore*, Theodosius the elder being mediator.—Willet's Synopsis Papismi, p. 130.

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ἐκπορευόμενον, καὶ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον, καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν Προφητῶν. Καὶ πιστεύω μίαν ἁγίαν Καθολικὴν καὶ Ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Ὁμολογῶ ἐν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. Προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν. It then pronounces an anathema against all contrary heresies, the Eunomians, the Anomœans, Arians, Eudoxians, semi-Arians, Enemies to the Holy Ghost; Marcellians, Photinians, and Apollinarians.

II. Confirms the jurisdiction of the bishops, according to the sixth canon of the Nicene Council, adding, that the bishops of the East shall govern the East, reserving its privileges to the Church of Antioch; and that the bishops of Asia, Thrace, and Pontus, shall *alone* regulate their respective dioceses.

III. Gives the bishops of Constantinople the post of honour next to the Bishop of Rome — διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νείαν Ῥωμήν.

This related not to jurisdiction, but to precedence of respect, owing, in all probability, to the circumstance of Rome having been the first imperial residence and the metropolis of the empire; therefore its bishop was looked up to with great respect, and highly honoured. Constantinople being the second imperial residence, from a like desire to honour the bishop of that city, they decreed him the next place <sup>6</sup>.

IV. Declares that Maximus was never a bishop, and annuls his ordination.

Maximus, a Cynic philosopher, the friend and countryman of Peter, patriarch of Alexandria, was a man of learning, who had suffered banishment in the persecution which followed the death of Athanasius. Gregory Nazianzen, invested by Peter with the epis-

<sup>6</sup> Tum etiam decernunt episcopum Constantinopolitanum honoris prærogativas post Romanum episcopum habere debere, eo quod Constantino-  
polis Nova esset Roma; ac rursum Nicenam Fidem confirmant, et Pa-

triarchas diversis provinciis constituunt; ita ut episcopi cujusque dioceseos ad extraneas ecclesias non transeant.—  
Socrates, Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 8; Sozomen, lib. vii. c. 9.

copate of Constantinople, having met with Maximus at this city, was imposed upon by his pretensions to sanctity, took him to his house, baptized him, and at length admitted him to inferior orders. Cave says, he was consecrated by three bishops of Egypt, sent by Peter, and that this circumstance, together with the translation of Gregory from Antioch to Constantinople, was the real cause of the second canon. Maximus endeavoured to supplant Gregory<sup>7</sup>, but was obliged to fly from Constantinople in consequence of the tumult raised against him. He brought his charge before a Western council, which, being imposed upon, confirmed him in the episcopate; but Theodosius, who saw through his artifices, would not ratify his consecration, but banished him<sup>8</sup>.

V. Approves the *tome* of the Western bishops, and of those of Antioch, which are thought to be the synodical letter of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, to the Council of Antioch (A.D. 378), and the letter of the fathers in answer. These acknowledge one and the same Divinity in the three persons of the Trinity<sup>9</sup>.

VI. Relates to the accusation of bishops. The term "œcumenical" was first applied to synods by this canon.

VII. States the conditions upon which heretics may be received into the Church, with the ceremony to be observed on the occasion. It ordains that Arians, Macedonians, Sabbatians (Novatians), Quartodecimans, and Apollinarians, shall be received after they have made profession of faith, and anathematized their errors, by the unction of the Holy Spirit; and the chrism, wherewith they shall be anointed on the forehead, the eyes, the mouth, the hands,

<sup>7</sup> Newman's Arians, p. 412; Sozom. viii. 9; Theodoret, v. 8.

<sup>8</sup> No penalty is ordained by the canons, except the punishment of Maximus; and the first canon anathematizes all heretics. Damophilus and other Arian bishops were expelled before the council sat.—Sozomen, lib. vii. c. 5; Socrates, lib. v. c. 7.

<sup>9</sup> The *tome* of the Western bishops

was the confirmation of the Nicene Creed, and anathematizing those who dissented from it, agreed upon at the Council of Sardica, where were met 341 bishops, being all of the Western Church.—Howel's Synopsis Canonum, p. 23; Dupin, vol. i. p. 273; Cave, vol. i. p. 366; and Beveridge's Cod. Canon. in loc.

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the ears, at the pronouncing of these words, "This is the seal of the Holy Spirit." As to the Eunomians, the Montanists, the Sabellians, and all other heretics, they were to be received like pagans, that is, at first they shall receive the imposition of hands, to give them the name of Christians. Afterwards, they shall be placed in the rank of catechumens. That they shall be exorcised by blowing three times into their faces and into their ears (exsufflation). That they shall be catechized, and that for a long time they shall be permitted to hear only the holy Scripture in the Church, and at last they shall be baptized<sup>1</sup>.

The ordinances which relate to Church government were not all of one class, but were issued under different titles. As I have given in this and the preceding sections the most ancient of these statutes, it may be useful to add such definitions as explain the distinct signification of each term used to designate any particular class of laws of this kind, as copied from the "*Corpus Juris Canonici*," to each of which a translation is annexed.

*Divinæ leges naturâ, humanæ moribus constant.*

*Omnes leges aut divinæ sunt, aut humanæ. Divinæ naturâ, humanæ moribus constant: ideoque hæ discrepant, quoniam aliæ aliis gentibus placent. Fas, lex divina est; jus, lex humana. Transire per agrum alienum fas est; jus non est.*

Divine laws are those which are framed by nature; human laws are founded on customs.

All laws are either divine or human. Laws are divine by nature, human by custom; so that these latter differ, because they vary in different countries. *Fas* (the motive to right actions) is divine law; *jus* (the performance of actions) is human law. It may be "*fas*," to pass through another man's field; but it is not "*jus*."

*Jus genus, lex autem species est.*

*Jus generale nomen est, lex autem juris est species. Jus*

<sup>1</sup> Dupin, vol. i. p. 273.

autem est dictum, quia justum est. Omne autem jus legibus  
et moribus constat.

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Jus is the genus, but lex is the species.

Jus is the general name, but lex is a species of jus. It is also called jus, because it is equitable; and all jus consists of laws and customs.

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Quid sit lex?

Lex est constitutio scripta.

Lex est constitutio populi, quâ majores natu, simul cum plebibus, aliquid sanxerunt.

What is law?

Law is a written constitution.

Law is a constitution of the people, by which the senate, in conjunction with the people, have sanctioned any thing.

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Quid sit constitutio vel edictum?

Constitutio vel edictum est quod tantum rex, vel imperator, constituit vel edicit.

What is a constitution or edict?

A constitution or edict is that which only the king or emperor appoints or orders.

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Omnes hæ species sæcularium legum partes sunt. Sed quia constitutio alia est civilis, alia ecclesiastica; civilis vero forense vel civile jus appellatur; quo nomine ecclesiastica constitutio appelletur videamus.

Ecclesiastica constitutio, canonis nomine censetur. Quid autem sit canon? Isidorus (in lib. vi. Etym. c. 16) declarat, dicens, Canon Græce, Latine Regula nuncupatur.

Unde dicatur Regula?

Regula dicta est, eo quod recte ducit, nec aliquando aliorum trahit. Alii vero dixerunt regulam dictam, vel quod

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regat, vel quod normam recte vivendi præbeat, vel quod distortum pravumque corrigat.

Porro canonum alii sunt decreta pontificum, alii statuta conciliorum. Conciliorum vero alia sunt universalialia, alia provincialia. Provincialium alia celebrantur auctoritate pontificis Romani, præsentem videlicet legato sanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ; alia vero auctoritate patriarcharum, vel primatum, vel metropolitanorum ejusdem provinciæ. Hæc quidem de generalibus regulis intelligenda sunt.

All these species (lex, plebiscitum, senatus consultum, etc.) are parts of secular laws.

But since one constitution is civil, and is called forensic or civil law, and another ecclesiastical, let us see by what name the ecclesiastical constitution should be called.

An ecclesiastical constitution is implied in the word "canon." But what is a canon? Isidore says it is called canon in Greek, regula or rule in Latin.

Whence is it called a rule?

It is called a rule because it guides us aright, and on no occasion leads us astray. Some say it is called a rule either because it governs our actions, or because it lays down a plan of living rightly, or because it corrects that which is wayward and wrong.

Moreover, some canons are the decrees of the pontiffs, others are statutes of councils. Of councils, some are general, some provincial. Of provincial councils, some are holden by the authority of the Roman pontiff, that is to say, the legate of the holy Roman Church being present; others by the authority of the patriarchs, primates, or metropolitans of each province. These are to be understood of general rules.

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Tomus secundus Corporis Juris Canonici ex decretalibus pontificum præcipue conflatus est, quæ olim epistolæ pontificum erant, in quibus consulti de quæstionibus disciplinæ ecclesiasticæ dubiis sententiam suam edebant, et ita rogati

ad instar juris consultorum simul decernebant, quo jure esset utendum.

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The second volume of the body of canon law is chiefly composed of the decretals of the popes, which were originally epistles of the pontiffs, in which, when consulted on doubtful questions of ecclesiastical discipline, they declared their opinions; and wherein also, having been required, they gave, as it were, a legal decision, showing the particular law in the established code to which the case in question was to be referred (that is, civil or ecclesiastical).

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Olim quidem decreta versabantur circa causas litigiosas, et ea designabant, quæ, causa cognita, statuebantur et pronunciabantur a prætoribus, præsidibus aliisque magistratibus majoribus, imo etiam ab ipsis principibus, et sic pro tribunali tantum, non de plano interponebantur. Breviter, quicquid ex decreto statutum erat, decretale vocabatur. Sic quædam bonorum possessio decreto dabatur, quæ ea de causa decretalis appellata est. Vocantur etiam epistolæ pontificum decreta. Sed longe in sensu diverso, quia pontifices de causa inter partes controversa, atque cognita, non dicebant sententias, sed consulentibus respondebant, et inde epistolæ eorum decretales seu decreta dictæ fuerunt; forsan ideo quod vim decreti habere deberent.—Vol. ii. p. 1, dis. n. i.

Long ago decrees were issued concerning litigated causes; and they called those decrees which, the cause being known, were determined and pronounced by the prætors, presidents, and other magistrates of the higher order; yea, even by princes, and thus were delivered from the tribunal or official seat, and not from any other place; in short, whatever was determined by a decree, was called a decretal. Thus a certain possession of property was awarded by a decree, which, on that account, was called a decretal (a tenure). The epistles of the pontiffs are also called decrees, but in a far different sense, because the pontiffs did not decide between parties

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in causes contested and brought to trial, but only gave answer to such as consulted them; and hence their epistles were called decretals or decrees, perhaps because they ought to have the force or power of decrees.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Policy of Theodosius the Great with respect to enforcing the Canon Law by the Civil Power, continued by Theodosius the Younger.—Council of Ephesus.—Account of the Theodosian Code.—The downfall of Paganism.*

FIFTY years elapsed between the first Council of Constantinople and the Council of Ephesus, which assembled in the year 431. Theodosius the Great, after a reign of sixteen years, died at Milan in 395<sup>1</sup>, and was succeeded in the East by Arcadius and Theodosius, junior; and, in the West, by Honorius and Valentinian III., each of whom continued the imperial supremacy over the Church. At the commencement of his reign, Arcadius was only seventeen years of age, and his brother Honorius was six years younger. The heathens, whose religious rites had been almost totally suppressed by the interdicts of Theodosius the Great, had still persons of influence among them ready to promote their revival when an opportunity offered; and the youth of the two imperial princes gave them new hopes that their aims to restore the glory of their ancient temples might be attended with success. Petitions and addresses, combining all the power and ingenuity of language, were preferred through the most probable channels, to each of the youthful rulers. Arcadius was inflexible in his determination to follow up the reformation of the religion of the state with the same energy as had been evinced by his father, Theodosius; and any return to pagan superstitions was debarred by a renewal of all the penalties which had been in force against them. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, inclined, as some writers consider, to make the rigid prin-

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<sup>1</sup> See Pagi, ad an. § 7.

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ciples of Origen the guide of his religious and moral conduct, was active and zealous at this time in his endeavours to establish strict Gospel discipline in the Church; and the authority with which his high station enabled him to act, was constantly exercised in efforts to root out the last remains of idolatry, as far as his influence extended. Finding, also, that the Arians had been active in disseminating their heresy in the Gothic settlements; he selected proper persons from among those tribes, and ordained them readers, deacons, and presbyters; by means of whose ministry he was not only enabled to check the progress of the objectionable principles which had been propagated; but to obtain for the universal Church great success among those extensive populations. He was, also, equally judicious and persevering in his desire to extend Christian knowledge by sending persons of Apostolic mind, to instruct the Scythians, who occupied the country beyond the Ister; by whose diligence and zeal, conversions were widely extended among the inhabitants of those northern tracts, who, till that time, had been entirely neglected. The impressive eloquence of this rigid disciplinarian in advocating the orthodox faith, obtained for him the appellation of Chrysostom, or *golden-mouthed*; but his rigour as a moralist, and the severity of his reproofs, which were levelled without distinction, raised against him many powerful enemies, among whom was Eudoxia, the empress; whose abuse of power had caused him to include her in his animadversions. The circumstance, moreover, of his having deposed no less than thirteen bishops of the Asiatic provinces; and having passed on others severe censures, in the course of one visitation, could not fail to excite against him the hostility of a strong body of clerical sufferers. On the other hand, in addition to the powerful effects of his oratory, directed with equal energy against the derelictions of high and low; his deeds of charity and beneficence had raised him to an almost unrivalled degree of favour in the estimation of the populace. Thus, when the court and the clergy had united in a determination to degrade him, their first attempt was frustrated by a general insurrection; nor was a subsequent effort to expel him from his see accomplished without again exposing the city to popular violence; the fury of which may be imagined

by the fact, that the palace and the principal Church were destroyed by fire before it could be repressed. At length, after having presided over the archi-episcopate of Constantinople for six years, he was exiled to an obscure town near the summit of Mount Taurus, where he died; his piety, virtues, and eminent abilities having gained for him the admiration of the faithful lovers of truth, and ranked him among the most worthy fathers of the catholic Church<sup>2</sup>.

Although the resolution to exterminate idolatry was not carried so far by Honorius in the Western empire as by his brother Arcadius in the East, inasmuch as the former ordered that the temples with their images and sacred utensils should be protected from injury; yet he prohibited the use of them in oblations or any other ceremonies. He was, also, a steady opponent of the heresies which had long prevailed, as well as of the Pelagian doctrines which, in the beginning of the fifth century, were taking root. Pelagius and Celestius, the former a British monk, named, in his vernacular tongue, Morgan, and the latter a native of Ireland, were the founders of this sect, upon both of whom the credit of unimpeachable sanctity and virtue, has been bestowed by St. Augustine; the most stern and persevering enemy of their theological sentiments. About the year 405, they professed their new principles in Rome, where they remained till the approach of the Goths, in 411. Thence they sailed to Africa, where Pelagius left his companion, and proceeded to Palestine. Celestius having offered himself for ordination as a presbyter in Carthage, was charged with heretical doctrines, and was excommunicated by a synod of that city in 412. Many had become friendly to his tenets, which Augustine undertook to controvert, who, in the course of his animadversions, alluded to Pelagius as the author of the heresy. Celestius had retired from Carthage to Ephesus, and Augustine having received the sanction of Jerome, who denounced Pelagius as a follower of Origen; sent a presbyter from Carthage to a synod at Jerusalem, and to another at Lydda, in 415, for the purpose of urging the condemnation of the Pelagian heresy. Notwithstanding the exertions of Jerome in the

<sup>2</sup> The errors as well as the virtues by Gibbon in a rather copious memoir, of S. Chrysostom have been delineated chap. xxxii.

same suit, they failed in their object; but the defeat only served to stimulate Augustine to follow up his attack with increased vigour. In 416 he summoned a council in Carthage, and one also in Numidia; in both of which he succeeded in procuring the offensive doctrines to be anathematized, and the decisions of the African bishops were ratified by Innocent, Bishop of Rome. In the following year, Innocent having died, Zosimus became his successor, who having been appealed to by Celestius and Pelagius, pronounced them both orthodox. Upon this the African bishops met in synod at Carthage in 417, and were unanimous in confirming their former decision, which was also fully established by a general council, held in the same city in 418, and by a rescript of the Emperor Honorius. These measures led Zosimus to publish his *epistola tractatoria*, in which he now condemned the Pelagian doctrines. Eighteen Italian bishops, who refused to sign the condemnatory epistle, were deposed, among whom was Julian, Bishop of Eclanum, who wrote in favour of the Pelagian opinions; and whose arguments drew forth from Augustine an express reply. The chief assertions of this sect may be summed up as follows:—that there is no original sin, nor is man necessarily corrupt from the fall; that Adam was mortal, by nature, before his transgression; that death was not the punishment of sin; that man, by his free will, can choose good as well as evil; that every one can of himself secure future happiness, but that a still higher happiness is offered by the Gospel; and that baptism is not a necessary condition of the remission of original sin; and other of their opinions tended to destroy the efficacy of grace, which was declared by them to be “the outward revealed law of God, and the doctrine in the Gospel, with a peculiar illumination of mind;” and that it was granted to assist man to live righteously. Out of these points arose many minor errors and absurdities entirely at variance with the authority of Scripture<sup>3</sup>.

The interminable disputes to which the Pelagian controversy gave rise, were instrumental in producing another variety of sectarians; who, from their aim to avoid the ex-

<sup>3</sup> The history and errors of the Pelagians are well examined by Vos-  
sius, in a book published (4to, Amst. 1655) upon the subject. See also Gieseler, i. 218—226.

tremes of the contending parties of the day, mingled the heresies of the one with the orthodox principles of the other, on which account they were called semi-Pelagians. They maintained the power of free will to produce goodness, faith, and newness of life; but that man could not persevere onwards to the attainment of that degree of holiness which should complete his own salvation without the grace of the Saviour. They denied that there was any peculiar or special dispensation of his grace through predestination, but that all were capable of receiving its efficacy or resisting it. It is likewise declared, that they held opinions concerning the predestination of infants, to which strong objections were raised. This sect sprang up in the South of France about the year 428, and was upheld by many persons of learning, the chief of whom was Cassian, a pupil of St. Chrysostom; and Honoratius, Bishop of Marseilles. On the other hand, it was resisted by Hormisdas, and Felix III., bishops of Rome; by Hilarius, of Arles; Prosper, of Aquitain; and others, who faithfully followed the doctrines of St. Augustine in their endeavours to intercept its progress, and to neutralize its effects.

Another heresy concerning the incarnation, and other abstruse points of doctrine relating to the union of the Word with the human offspring of Mary, greatly disturbed the Church at the same time as the former. It arose from Nestorius refusing to apply the term Θεοτόκος, mother of God, to Mary, the mother of Christ. Nestorius substituted the word Χριστοτόκος. This led, of course, to a violent controversy; and from the rank and character of the divines who had embarked in the dispute, it became impossible to bring the discussion to an end, without the decision of a council. As the settlement of this question was, therefore, the principal reason for calling together a general council at Ephesus; before giving an account of the proceedings of that synod it will be proper to add a few further particulars, in order to show the circumstances by which this contention was rendered of signal importance.

Nestorius, a Syrian, born in Germanicia, a monk of Euprepias, near Antioch, of the Church in which city he had been formerly a presbyter, was elected to the episcopate of Constantinople upon the death of Sisinnius, in 428. He

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was very violent in his censures against heretics, and immediately after his consecration he addressed the emperor:—  
 “Give me, O Cæsar! give me the earth purged of heretics, and I will give you in exchange the kingdom of heaven. Exterminate with me the heretics, and with you I will exterminate the Persians!” He violently attacked a secret conventicle of Arians, by setting fire to it, and the flames spreading, did much damage to the city, on which account he was named *the incendiary*. He also persecuted the Quartodecimans in Lydia, Caria, and in other parts. Soon after his elevation to the high metropolitan dignity, he permitted Anastasius, his priest, and Dorotheus, a bishop, to preach the doctrine above mentioned, which he himself also maintained. Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicum, opposed it, and at length the clergy, monks, and people combined against the new heresy. Cyril of Alexandria also resolutely impugned it; affirming, in opposition, the principles laid down in the Nicene Creed, and adding twelve tremendous anathemas. Against these Nestorius promulgated as many. A long correspondence took place between Cyril, Celestine, Nestorius, and the Eastern and Western bishops, all without the effect of bringing Nestorius to confess his error<sup>4</sup>. At last both parties, Nestorius as well as the orthodox, applied to the emperor to summon a general council, which he did; and deputed Candidian to watch the proceedings, not for the purpose of interfering with the controversialists; but to prevent disturbance from the monks and others, who had assembled in great numbers. The following is the synopsis of the third general council, held at Ephesus.

<sup>4</sup> See Gieseler, i. 228—237.

COUNCIL IV.—EPHESUS, ŒCUMENICAL III.	
Date.	A.D. 431 <sup>5</sup> . Session three months, from June to beginning of September ; according to some October.
Number of Bishops.	About two hundred <sup>6</sup> .
By whom summoned.	Theodosius, junior. Not by the Bishop of Rome <sup>7</sup> .
President.	Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria <sup>8</sup> .
Why and against what opinions called.	Against the heresy which asserted, that there are two persons in Christ, and that the Virgin Mary should not be called the mother of God, though she was the mother of Christ <sup>9</sup> ; and again the opinion that the union of the <i>eternal word</i> with the man <i>Jesus</i> , was not an union of the two natures, but one of will and affection.—Grier, p. 71.
Against whom.	Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople. Venema calls him "patriarch," vol. iv. p. 471.
Chief decrees and canons.	The canons from this council were seven, the chief of which were :—The condemnation of Nestorius. (Grier, p. 675 ; Venema, vol. iv. p. 473.) That if any one should write or compose any other faith than that defined by the Council of Nice (if of the clergy), he should be deposed, but if of the laity, anathematized. The jurisdiction of bishops decreed to be inviolable.—Grier, pp. 75, 76.
Penalties.	Deposition, banishments.
Sufferers.	Nestorius, Cyril, Memnon.
Emperor.	Theodosius, junior.
Bishop of Rome.	Celestine, who was represented by his legates, Arcadius and Projectus (bishops), and Philip (presbyter).

<sup>5</sup> Venema, iv. 470 ; Cave's Lit. Hist. i. 475 ; Du Pin, iv. 197.

<sup>6</sup> Vide, ut supra.

<sup>7</sup> Ut supra. Baronius, A.D. 431.

<sup>8</sup> "Ephesiæ synodo sanctæ memoriæ Cyrillus præsedet."—Leo, epist. xlv.

Bellarmino says, that Cyril was the

pope's legate in this council. Leo mentions not this. It may be remarked, also, that the pope used to send legates of his own, and not give commission to the bishops of the Greek Church.

Valentinian and Marcian thus testify of this synod : Cui beatæ memoriæ

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In the beginning of June, 431, the bishops who had been summoned to the council began to arrive at Ephesus from all parts of the East and West. Cyril, with not less than fifty Egyptian prelates to support his cause, entered the city some days previous to the time appointed. Nestorius arrived nearly at the same time, but with only ten companions. These distinguished personages were soon followed by others; and on the 22nd of the month the synod was opened in the great Church of St. Mary. But although it appears that there were between 160 and 200 bishops present, the number was yet far from complete. John, Bishop of Antioch, had not arrived; and with him was expected a large body of prelates devoted to the cause of Nestorius. Loud complaints, therefore, were made against Cyril, who had been chosen president, for commencing proceedings; and against Memnon, the Bishop of Ephesus, who supported him. To keep up, however, some degree of fairness, Nestorius was formally summoned to attend; but the messengers were prevented from entering his house by the guards at the gate, and the synod, therefore, immediately proceeded with its discussions. Composed as it was, little doubt could be entertained as to the purport of its decisions. The letters he had written, his sermons, and anathemas, were before the men to whose opinions they were especially opposed; and late in the evening of the same day on which the council first met, Nestorius was declared a blasphemer against the Lord Jesus Christ, was deposed from his bishopric, and expelled the priesthood.

Intelligence of this transaction was forthwith dispatched to Constantinople, both by Cyril and Nestorius. The latter

Cyrellus præfuit.—Codex, lib. i. tit. viii. 2, 3.

In the Ephesine synod, Nestorius, with consent of Celestinus, was condemned, mediante Cyrillo, &c. Cyril being president.—Gelasius, Decr. pt. i. dis. xv. c. 3.

Again, dis. xvi. c. 10. The fathers in this council concluded twelve articles against the twelve heresies of Nestorius, authore Cyrillo, Cyril being the author.—Willet's Synopsis, p. 30.

Evagrius says, that Cyril presided in the room of Celestine; but adds, *Sicuti dictum est*, as if he spoke from rumour

and not of his own knowledge.

<sup>9</sup> Hooker says, "Nestorius' heresy divided Christ into two persons, the Son of God and the Son of man; the one, a person begotten of God before all worlds; the other, also, a person born of the Virgin Mary; and in special favour chosen to be made entire to the Son of God above all men; so that whoever will honour God must together honour Christ, with whose person God hath vouchsafed to join Himself in so high a degree of gracious respect and favour."—Eccles. Pol. book v. sec. 52. See whole section, 52—55.

complained, and apparently with justice, of the mode in which his enemies had arrogated to themselves the authority of the council, which, he argued, could not be considered complete till all the prelates, formally invited to its sittings, had arrived. His complaint was borne out by the testimony of the Count Candidian, whom the emperor had sent to represent him at Ephesus; and to preserve the peace of the city. Still further to increase the odium under which Cyril was placed, the Bishop of Antioch, and others from the East, whom the length of the journey had delayed, arrived soon after the hasty decision of the council; and a demand was immediately made that it should be re-assembled and commence its proceedings altogether anew. Not content with this, the friends of Nestorius continued their opposition to what had been done, by the counter-condemnation of Cyril; and by excommunicating him and his party as favourers of Arianism. Scarcely was this done when the emperor's answer arrived; and Cyril, who had, of course, wholly disregarded the proceedings of the Nestorians, found that their complaints had been successful. Theodosius directed, that whatever had taken place at the council should be rescinded; and that none of the bishops should leave Ephesus till some of his ministers had examined the real state of the business. Cyril replied to this letter of the emperor by another, in which he stated that Candidian had given a partial view of the matter, and begged that he might be allowed to visit Constantinople himself; and explain the whole of the affair in person. A similar epistle was sent by the Bishop of Antioch, in which the emperor is earnestly entreated to remove Cyril and Memnon from Ephesus; and Nestorius himself is stated to have written to a person at court, declaring that he would consent to employ the term in dispute, on condition that Cyril was obliged to renounce his Apollinarian heresy.

*The Acts of the Council.*

There were seven acts of this council. The first contains the condemnation of Nestorius. This act was passed and confirmed, as already signified, in the absence of John, Bishop of Antioch, and the Oriental bishops. The time ap-

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pointed for the meeting was the Feast of Pentecost, June 7th. All the bishops, with the exception of the Bishop of Antioch and his attendants, and the legates from Rome, had arrived at Ephesus five or six days before the day appointed. Fifteen days after Pentecost were allowed to elapse without any proceedings being instituted. Cyril and others considered they ought to commence the business for which they had been summoned, more especially upon being informed, by two of the Eastern bishops already there, that the remainder would not be dissatisfied if the council began business without them. On the 22nd of June, therefore, the synod assembled in the great Church of St. Mary, where the reason of their being called together was made known; the emperor's circular letter, bearing date November 19th, 430, with Count Candidian's commission from the emperor to assist at the council, were also read, and the synod opened.

Before any accusations were brought against Nestorius, he was three times summoned to attend the council, but refused, as before intimated, on the plea that all the bishops were not present. The Nicene symbolum was then recited in council, as the foundation of the orthodox doctrine. Afterwards the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius, and his answer, were read, when the latter was unanimously condemned, and the former approved. They then received the evidence of those who had heard Nestorius and his adherents publicly deliver their opinions, which were confirmed by quotations from various parts of his writings. The assembled bishops then condemned them, and pronounced sentence of deposition in these words:—"The most impious heretic, Nestorius, refusing to appear at our citation, and not suffering the holy bishops which we sent to him to enter into his house, we were obliged to examine his cause; and having convicted him of dispersing and teaching an impious doctrine, as hath been proved, as well by his letters and other writings, as by the sermons which he hath preached in his metropolis, as hath been confirmed by sufficient testimonies,—we have been forced, according to the letter of St. Celestine, Bishop of Rome, to pronounce against him this heavy sentence, which we cannot do but with grief:—Our Lord Jesus Christ, against whom Nestorius hath blasphemed, declares

him, by this synod, deprived of his episcopal dignity, and separated from the communion of the episcopal order<sup>1</sup>.”

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The next day the sentence was sent to Nestorius, and he was branded with the title of *the second Judas*. He wrote to the emperor in the name of himself, and of the sixteen bishops who signed his letter, concerning the proceedings of the synod, “that he had been ill-used, in that Memnon, Bishop of Ephesus, had allowed his enemies to use the Church of St. Mary; but had refused to him, and to those who thought with him, licence to go into the Church of St. John.” Candidian’s letter was also to the effect, that great haste had been shown by Cyril and Memnon to condemn Nestorius without waiting for the Oriental bishops, as he had requested. Five days after the condemnation and deposition, when John of Antioch, and the Eastern bishops, about twenty-six in number, arrived, and were informed of what had taken place, they were offended that their arrival had not been awaited; and they held a synod in the inn where they lodged, with the ten bishops who came with Nestorius<sup>2</sup>, and passed sentence of deposition against Cyril and Memnon; excommunicating those who had communion with them, until they should confess the Nicene faith without addition, and condemn and reject the anathemas of Cyril<sup>3</sup>. The proceedings of the assembly, over which Cyril presided, were, in consequence of Candidian’s relation, declared null and void, but those of John confirmed and ratified, so that Cyril and Memnon were deposed<sup>4</sup>.

The second act of the council was on the 10th of July, when the legates from Rome, Arcadius, Projectus, and Philip had arrived. The council occupied itself in reading the letters

<sup>1</sup> Cum vero singuli episcopi vota dedissent, omnes simul clamarunt, Anathema Nestoris.—Venema, iv. 473.

<sup>2</sup> Cave says, that there were forty-three who were accused of being the fomentors of the disputation and cause of the tumult.

<sup>3</sup> In synodi Cyrillianæ epistola ad

clerum C. Pol. dicitur, Nestorium esse damnatum justa S. Trinitatis sententia, et divino patrum judicio.—Venema, iv. 473.

<sup>4</sup> Du Pin, iv. 196—198; Cave, i. 475, 476; Venema, iv. 472—474; Jortin’s Remarks, iii. 114—119.

of Celestine to the synod, which had been written to Cyril, in answer to a communication from him; and one to Theodosius also, whom he exhorts to protect the ancient faith, meaning the Nicene symbolum.

These letters are recorded in the acts of the council.

The third act took place the day following, when the acts of the first session were read to the legates, who approved of them, condemned Nestorius, and subscribed his condemnation. They then wrote to the emperor, informing him that the Western Church, by them, condemned the doctrine and person of Nestorius; and requested him to allow them to ordain, at Constantinople, another bishop in his room. They, moreover, signified to the clergy and people of Constantinople, that they should elect another person instead of Nestorius.

The fourth act, which passed in an assembly held upon July 16th, over which Juvenal presided, rescinded what had been done by John of Antioch and his companions against Cyril and Memnon. Cyril brought the matter forward, stating to the synod what had taken place, and contended, that they had acted regularly and according to Church discipline; that John had held a council in which were condemned bishops, and those who were no bishops, and issued his sentence of deposition; that he and his coadjutors were twice summoned, but did not appear; and that John had caused to be posted, in a conspicuous place, a libel against Cyril, Memnon, and others of the bishops, in which he declared the two former deposed for heresy, and the rest excommunicated for favouring them.

The fifth act consisted of Cyril bringing under their notice the libel of John, and requiring that he should be summoned the third time to appear before the council. This he refused to do, and they proceeded to condemn him. They wrote an account of their proceedings to Theodosius, as well as to Celestine, Bishop of Rome. The act concluded by a sermon by Cyril against John.

The Eastern bishops wrote also to the emperor concerning what was done, and praying him to summon

them to Constantinople, that their cause might be enquired into.

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In the sixth act, July 22nd, it was decreed, "That it was not allowable for any person whatever to allege, write, or make a different creed from that which was made by the holy fathers assembled at Nice; and that all those who are so audacious as to make, or allege, or offer, any other to be signed by such as turn themselves, or are converted to the Church, whether they be Jews, pagans, or heretics; if they be bishops or clergymen (who do so), they shall be degraded from their dignity, and if they be laymen, they shall be accursed."

This act concluded with a sermon on Christian fortitude by Cyril.

In the last act, the jurisdiction of bishops is decreed to be inviolable. The metropolitan Bishop of Constantia, Troilus, was dead, and John of Antioch wished to ordain a bishop to that see, and to bring the bishops of Cyprus under his jurisdiction; but letters had been obtained from Dionysius the prefect, prohibiting them from ordaining a bishop without the permission of the Council of Ephesus. The matter was brought forward by Rheginus, Zeno, and Evagrius, Bishop of Cyprus<sup>5</sup>. The council considered that "the ancient custom should be observed in all the provinces, and that no bishop should attempt to bring under his jurisdiction a province not heretofore subject to him nor his predecessors; and that if any one hath endeavoured to do so, or hath kept any province by force, he shall be forced to resign it, and restore it to whom it belongs, that the canons be not violated; and that haughtiness of worldly power may not creep into the Church, under the pretences of the priesthood, and so we lose the liberty which Jesus Christ hath purchased for us by his blood, He who is the Saviour of all men<sup>6</sup>."

<sup>5</sup> Septima enim actione istius concilii, Rheginus episcopus ecclesie apud Constantiam Cypri, reliquorum istius insule episcoporum nomine, libellum patribus in synodo congregatis obtulit; quo conquestus est episcopum clerumque

Antiochenum voluisse vi cogere et subicere sibi episcopos insule Cypri, contra Apostolicos canones, et definitiones sanctissimae Nicenae synodi.—Beveridge's Codex, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Two letters were read, which

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Six canons were also passed decreeing the deposition of those bishops who were joined to Nestorius, or embraced his doctrines, or who communicate with excommunicated or deposed persons, or condemn or abuse the acts of the synod. They also restore those who had been excommunicated, and enjoin the clergy not to obey the Nestorians.

Waddington, in a note upon the heresy of Nestorius, says, "In a letter addressed to John of Jerusalem, about two years after the Council of Ephesus, when the matter was inflamed almost beyond hope, Nestorius attempts a justification, by saying, that he found the religious world divided between *Theotocos* and *Anthropotocos*, and that his only object was to unite both parties by the intermediate term *Christotocos*. But he had then discovered the folly of his attempt." The same author also observes, that "whatever may be the most appropriate appellation for the mother of Jesus Christ, it was assuredly the proof of a narrow and contentious spirit, that the head of the Oriental Church should in any way have interfered in so vain a dispute<sup>7</sup>."

An author, also, disposed to consider that Nestorius and his associates were persecuted<sup>8</sup>, has stated, that Theodosius, upon issuing the condemnation of the patriarch, dismissed the council in these remarkable words. "God is my witness that I am not the author of this confusion<sup>9</sup>. His providence will discern and punish the guilty. Return to your provinces, and may your private virtues repair the mischief and scandal of your meeting." Four years elapsed after the passing of the sentence before Nestorius was banished. He first retired to his original convent near Antioch, but was finally exiled to an oasis in the deserts of Upper Egypt, where he died.

We are now brought to consider the next cause of the persecution of Christian by Christian, the publication of the Theodosian code in the year 438. It was undertaken

ordered, that the bishops of Cyprus should ordain the Bishop of Constantinople, according to the canons of the Council of Nice, and as ancient custom decreed. κατὰ τοὺς κανόνας τῶν ὁσίων πατέρων καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν.—Cave, vol. i. p. 477.

<sup>7</sup> Waddington's Hist. of the Church, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Fleury, lib. liv. sec. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Some tumult had occurred in the city in consequence of the condemnation of the patriarch, to which the emperor alludes by the use of the term "confusion," and the immediate dissolution of the council was necessary in order to prevent the further extension of the outrage.—Fleury, ut supra.

about the year 435, at the command of Theodosius the Younger. It contains the imperial constitutions from Constantine to his own time. The infliction of the severe punishment of banishment upon Arius, and the sentence of death denounced upon the readers of his books, were much regretted, we may believe, by the Emperor Constantine; if we may judge of his feelings by his subsequent conduct. The laws which thus established persecution, as a part of the penal code of the empire, were probably passed as an experiment to prevent, rather than as a principle to punish, heresy. The absurd and wicked experiment, however, if it was such, was repeatedly renewed by his successors. A mass of confused and sanguinary enactments was at length passed and consolidated, with various enlargements and additions, into that atrocious and cruel code; which is not only execrated by the friends of humanity and religion for its detestable provisions—but which is memorable in the annals of jurisprudence, as being the foundation of that intolerable canon law against heresy by which the Church of Rome became the principal criminal in the guilt of persecution, which was first established, and which must therefore be shared by the emperors. Though the Justinian code, which was promulgated between the years 528 and 566, when the edicts which Justinian published after the last edition of his code were collected into one volume, and given to the world under the name of *Novellæ*, confirmed and strengthened the principal regulations of the Theodosian code; and though it will be necessary, therefore, to consider the latter as well as the former; yet the Theodosian code must be regarded with most attention, as the principal foundation of the persecuting canon law. The imperial edicts by which Christianity was first tolerated, then legalized, and then established as the religion of the empire, were now collected into one volume of laws. Immediately after its publication, the Theodosian code was received by an edict of Valentinian III. into the empire of the West. The Justinian code superseded its authority in the East; but the code of Theodosius still retained its authority in the West, and therefore in Italy and Rome.—The barbarians, who about this time invaded that portion of the empire, permitted the Romans to retain the use of their existing laws. In 506, Alaric, king of the Visigoths in Gaul,

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ordered a legal code to be prepared, in which the Roman and Gothic usages and laws should be formed into one body of law. This was accordingly done by his chancellor, Anianus, and it was called from him the *Breviarium Aniani*. This body of law was extracted chiefly from the Theodosian code, from the works of the principal Roman lawyers, and from the edicts of the subsequent emperors between Theodosius and Alaric<sup>1</sup>. It was published for the use of the Western empire before the code of Justinian was compiled. It superseded the former laws, and became the only legal work of authority. The enormous and inexpiable evil it occasioned to mankind was, that it not only confirmed in the West all the persecuting enactments which had begun in the Eastern empire; but it habituated the new tribes, which were now becoming a part of the empire, to the idea of persecution for religious opinion. The Church of Rome was now beginning to seize the falling sceptre, and to mount the vacant throne of the imperial sovereign; and when the barbarians came down to hold divided empire with the Church, they found that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were united to punish heresy as a crime, and heretics as criminals; and they were not slow to follow the general example, and to strengthen the universal error. When the Manichees fled from Africa to Rome about the year 445, and the Bishop of Rome of that day, Leo the Great, appointed inquisitors to discover and bring them to trial; he only followed the example of the emperor Theodosius, who had already appointed inquisitors to search out heretics. Many of the provisions of the Theodosian code were subsequently repeated also in the capitularies of Charlemagne<sup>2</sup>. The Manichees, whom Diocletian had commanded to be burnt alive<sup>3</sup>, were no less persecuted by the Christian emperors, whose edicts formed a part of the Theodosian code. Valentinian<sup>4</sup>, Gratian<sup>5</sup>, and Theodosius the Great, renewed the same law, and Messianus, the proconsul of Africa, immediately executed some of that sect whom he had discovered. They were condemned by the

<sup>1</sup> See Butler on the Roman Law, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> By a rescript dated from Alex-

andria, March 31st, A.D. 290.—Baron. ad ann. 287, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Cod. Theod. lib. iii. p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. lib. vii. p. 120.

Theodosian and Justinian codes, and Huneric, king of the Vandals, imitating the imperial example, caused great numbers of the same party to be burnt alive, and banished the rest from his dominions<sup>6</sup>. The Manichees were accused of great crimes as well as erroneous opinions, and history is obscure on this point. However this may be, they were persecuted, not for crime alone, but for their errors as a religious party; and this persecution was practised not by one ruler, but by many—not as the custom of one day or year, but as the result of the universal law which began with the heathen and was continued by the Christian emperors; and which was executed alike by the bishop and the Vandal, and which has remained till nearly our own day, as the disgrace and curse of Christianity.

Instead, therefore, of declaiming against the bishops of Rome as the authors of the crime of persecution, I shall proceed to consider in what manner the guilt of that crime must be imputed to the emperors who enacted the first laws; and laid the foundation for the subsequent folly of that Church. The power of the Church of Rome, of which we are soon to speak, was based on the canon-civil law; and it is necessary, therefore, to our rightly understanding the causes of the universal prevalence of persecution by the Church of Rome in the days of its greatness, to survey the code of laws upon which its influence and authority were established. It is not sufficient to declaim against the Church of Rome. Our wiser plan will be to ascertain the causes of the conduct we condemn; and to endeavour to show in what manner they may be removed. He is not a philosophical student of history who selects the chief facts which float on the surface of time, and either eulogizes or censures the actors, without reference to the circumstances which led to the transactions in question. I am anxious, therefore, to dwell on the sources of the crime, rather than to indulge in the usual descriptions of the sufferings and sorrows of the victims; or in angry denunciations against the ecclesiastical criminals. We may safely indulge the hope that the state of public feeling that permitted the sanguinary scenes to which I allude, will never

<sup>6</sup> See Bower's Popes, Pope Leo, note and references, vol. ii. p. 24, an. 445.

again recur; but the best mode of preventing the possibility of the recurrence of persecution is, to point out the causes of its former prevalence, as a warning both to rulers and their people.

Another reason may be mentioned as justifying our considering the laws of Theodosius. Strange to say, they are passed over by our principal historian as if they had been superseded by the laws of Justinian. It is indeed difficult to understand the meaning of Gibbon's expression when he assures us, "that in the laws of Justinian the narrow distinction of paganism and Christianity, introduced by the superstition of Theodosius, had been abolished by the consent of mankind<sup>7</sup>."—The distinction never has been and never can be abolished. Justinian was not only equally superstitious, but he was equally cruel with Theodosius. The infidel historian seems to have regarded the atrocious laws of persecution which characterized both codes, as well as the sufferings of the Christian victims of those laws, as unworthy of his lofty notice. His eulogies are reserved for heathen virtues, and his censures for Christian follies. His indifference to the mass of sorrow, inflicted by Christian upon his fellow Christian, could not have proceeded from his zeal against heresy, or from his love for orthodoxy; both of which motives might have been imputed to him if he had been a Christian. His silence proceeded from the usual error of his foolish race wherever they may be found, and by whatever name they may be called. He despised all Christianity as one mighty error; and its professors as weak and unphilosophical drivellers. He omits in his celebrated view of the laws of Justinian all notice of the enactments which confirmed the edicts of Theodosius; and while he enlarges in his otherwise admirable chapter, with a free and liberal spirit, upon the division of the institutes of Justinian, into the questions concerning persons, things, actions, private wrongs, and criminal law; and had, therefore, "ample room and verge enough" to consider the peculiar laws of persecution, which Justinian borrowed from Theodosius—he passes them all over. He makes not one remark on the edicts which deprived the subject of the rights of toleration, and granted to the sovereign the unjust power of persecution. Eloquence, impartiality,

<sup>7</sup> Gibbon, vol. iv. chap. xlv. p. 361.

and candour, adorn and dignify his pages when he speaks of Cicero and Plato, of Ulpian and Papinian, of Tribonian, and their fellow-jurisprudents; but he cannot find a word of censure, or praise, or notice, for that portion of the laws embodied from Theodosius in the code of Justinian, which have influenced, more than all the rest on which he so delightfully expatiates, the character and destinies of the nations of the empire and of Europe. Yet this is modern philosophy. Laws are the permanent memorials of principles, the source of manners, the formers of opinions, the foundation of the characters, the controversies, and the customs of nations. Freedom and peace, or slavery and agitation, are the results of the justice or injustice of legislation. The unjust laws of Theodosius are the substratum of the enactments which rendered the dominion of the Church of Rome the most powerful, but at length the most intolerable authority, which has yet appeared among mankind. We will consider both that code and the code of Justinian which followed it, in those instances which relate to the doctrine of persecution. We shall thus be enabled to understand better the origin of those portions of the canon law which relate to the same subject.

We cannot, indeed, rightly appreciate the origin and extent of the wonderful authority of the Church of Rome, unless we thus consider the code which the first historian of the last century, in his absurd philosophy, or contemptuous estimate of Christianity, deemed to be alike unworthy of his censure, approbation, or notice.

The Theodosian code consists of sixteen books, which embody in one system of law the edicts of Constantine, Valens, Valentinian, and all the Christian emperors up to the time of its publication. The laws respecting religion are contained in the sixteenth book, to which, therefore, we shall principally attend. It will, however, be necessary to take some brief notice of the preceding books. They sometimes incorporate the laws referring to religion or to heresy.

The first book treats merely of the imperial constitutions, edicts, rescripts, and mandates, the authority of the *responsa prudentum*, and the duties of various officers of state and magistracy.

The second contains the laws respecting the jurisdiction

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The laws of the eighth title of this book forbid all lawsuits to be holden on Sunday, excepting those which were required by charity or necessity, such as the manumission of slaves. The laws for the observance of the Sunday, such as freedom from arrest for debt, &c., enacted by Valentinian and other emperors, may be said to form a part of the laws of England at this moment. Their enactments became customs throughout the empire. The same laws are repeated in the Justinian code.—Lib. iii. tit. xii. *De Feriis Leg. 3.*

The third discusses intermarriages of barbarians with Romans, families, dowries, tutorship, &c.

The fourth treats of wills, freemen, taxes, houses, &c.

The seventh title in this book provides for the manumission of slaves, which were to be celebrated in the Churches, as they had formerly taken place in the temples of the gods. This law is found in the Justinian code, book i. tit. xiii. It was enacted by Constantine, A.D. 316, by Hosius of Corduba, A.D. 321. One of the first blessings which Christianity conferred upon the world was the lightening the chain of the slave. Slavery was gradually abolished through its influence among the Romans, as it will eventually be destroyed by the same power among all nations.

The fifth book treats of heirship—properly of clergy and monks, the rights of servants and husbandmen.

The sixth book, the beginning of which is lost, refers principally in the remainder to the ranks, honours, privileges, and duties of various magistrates, heads of provinces, attendants on the court, camp, and senate.

The seventh principally treats of military affairs.

The eighth treats of the legal privileges of various secondary practitioners in the law, and functionaries in the army—of the property of women, and of settlements.

The ninth gives the laws concerning treason, slaves, coining, sedition, and the privilege of sanctuary.

The clergy were commanded not to protect criminals.

The privilege of the sanctuary, or of preserving life by taking refuge at the altars of churches, was extended to every part of the sacred precincts.

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The tenth refers principally to the public taxation.

The eleventh relates to the various modes of collecting the taxes, debtors, certain privileges of the clergy and bishops, and provides, that apostates from the Christian faith should not be admitted as witnesses in any court of law.

The twelfth treats of municipal rewards and honours.

The thirteenth on the privileges of physicians and others.

The fourteenth on the privileges of the principal cities, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, &c.

The fifteenth on the public works, aqueducts, prices of bread, and other necessities of life, places in the theatre, the supply of corn from Alexandria, &c.

The sixteenth wholly refers to ecclesiastical matters, and may be regarded as the foundation of the whole mass of the subsequent laws, which relate to the topics on which it treats<sup>8</sup>.

*The title of the first law is, "On the Catholic faith"<sup>9</sup>.*

It contains four provisions, which are,

I. That Christians are not to be appointed as the civil or military guardians of the heathen temples.

This was a re-enactment of the law of Valentinian the Elder, A.D. 365. Julian, it is supposed—for this emperor having apostatized from Christianity, his

<sup>8</sup> Meminit hujus libri xvi. Hincmarus Remensis, epist. iv. c. 6. Decimus sextus, inquit, liber legum, quibus, una cum sacris canonibus, sancta moderatur ecclesia.—Cod. Theod. ap. Gothofred. vol. vi. p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> I Cod. Just. i. Tribonianus auctiorem fecit titulum, De Summâ Trinitate, et Fide Catholicâ; et ut nemo de eâ publice contendere audeat.

I may observe here, that the title so commonly adopted by the Church of Rome, may be probably considered as deriving its origin from the general use of the several words in the reigns of Theodosius and Justinian. The Church of Rome calls *itself* the Roman Catholic

Church. The faith in the Trinity is here entitled the catholic faith, and it was the faith of the Roman empire. By the law in the Justinian code (Dig. l. i. tit. 5), *all* persons in the Roman empire are to be called Romans or Roman citizens. The Churches of Britain, Constantinople, and Rome, were consequently Roman Catholic Christians; and any member of an Episcopal Trinitarian Church is, therefore, in this sense, justified in adopting this epithet to describe his own faith. The term is independent of any derivation from the modern Church of Rome. A member of the Church is a Roman Catholic Christian.

laws are not admitted into the Theodosian code—commanded that Christians should be elected to this duty. Theodosius, in this respect, seems to have paid more regard to the consciences of his Christian subjects than some modern governments, who have ordered their military servants to superintend the processions which such servants deem to be idolatrous. If the plea of military discipline be urged to defend the practice, the same defence was put forward by the heathen emperors, who commanded their soldiers to sacrifice one small handful of incense to the imperial standards.

II. By the second law the catholic faith is declared to be that which was delivered by St. Peter to the subjects of the Roman empire, which consisted in the Apostolic discipline, and the doctrine of the Trinity. The followers of this faith are to be called Catholic Christians, and the bishops of Rome and Alexandria are referred to as maintaining the same faith.

It must be remembered, that the Church of Rome had not yet advanced so far as to demand, or to exercise authority, over the Churches of Alexandria and elsewhere. All Churches were still equal, and the expression *Romans*, in the Theodosian and Justinian codes, designates the subjects of the Roman empire, and not the inhabitants of the city of Rome, or the members of the particular Church of Rome, except in the places where these are especially mentioned or referred to. The assemblies for worship of the adherents of this catholic<sup>1</sup> faith are to be called *churches*, those of the heretics are to be named *conventicles*.

III. The third law of this division confirms the above remarks. It declares the catholic faith to be the Nicene doctrine, as it was then held by the Churches not of Rome

<sup>1</sup> The word *catholic* is identified with, and is a convertible term with, the word *orthodox*; and it is used without any reference to the members of the Church of Rome in particular, to describe the followers of the faith em-

bodied in the Nicene creed.

See the long note of Gothofred, and his references to Basil, Cyril, Augustine, and Gregory Nazianzen, on this point.—Cod. Theod. vol. vi. p. 8.

only, but of Constantinople, Alexandria, of the East generally, in the Pontic diocese in Asia, and elsewhere.

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IV. The fourth law grants to the Arians, as well as to the orthodox, the power of meeting in council in every part of the Roman world <sup>2</sup>.

This law is omitted in the code of Justinian, having been much opposed by Ambrose, the celebrated Bishop of Milan.

*The second title is, "On the Bishops, the Churches, and the Clergy."*

It comprises forty-seven laws.

Law I. Exempts the catholic clergy from civil offices.

It was a re-enactment of the law of Constantine, A.D. 313. The emperor Julian, it may be said, conferred a privilege on the Christians by exempting them from serving in the offices of the state, if the same exemption by Constantine and Theodosius be declared a privilege. The difference, however, between the enactments consists in this, that Julian declared the Christians to be ineligible to those offices of state for which they were well qualified, and in which they desired to serve. The other emperors exempted them from those which were either connected with idolatry, or were incompatible with the duties of their profession as Christians <sup>3</sup>. Julian insulted them; Constantine honoured them. Julian intended a punishment; Constantine conferred a favour.

II. Exempts the clergy from all liability to serve in offices of every kind.

III. As the above laws might be abused, the third law decreed, that none should be ordained to the prejudice of any civil community or society, the members of which were required, by virtue of their estates, to bear the offices of the country.

<sup>2</sup> The words of the law are, *Damus . . . . convocatis ex omni orbe Romano . . .* where the word "*Romano*" is used in the sense I have mentioned. It describes not the Church of Rome, but the empire at large.

<sup>3</sup> Paratitlon to lib. xii. See particularly Bingham, book iv. chap. iv., where the subject of the ordination of the clergy is discussed at greater length than by Gothofred.

There were in the cities persons who were called curiales or decuriones, who constituted the court or common council. Out of this body were chosen all civil officers, the magistrates of the city, the collectors of the public revenue, the overseers of public works, and others whose titles and duties are specified by Gothofred, to the number of twenty-two<sup>4</sup>. The estates of these persons must be of certain value; and none of these was to be ordained till he had discharged all the offices he was required to fill by virtue of his property. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, mentions some instances of persons being ordained who were required, after thirty years' service, to return to their secular duties as members of the common council of their city. The law before us was passed to prevent these inconveniences, A.D. 320.

IV. Wills were permitted to be made in favour of the Church.

The first date of this law was 321, in the consulship of Crispus and Constantius.

V. Ecclesiastics were not to be required to attend the sacrifices.

A law of Constantine, A.D. 323.

VI. Decrees, that if a cleric be ordained, to the prejudice of the common council, he may be required to resume his municipal duties.

This was another law of Constantine, passed in the year 326, similar in effect to the third.

VII. Grants the privilege of exemption from the discharge of certain offices to the inferior clergy throughout Numidia.

Passed by Constantine, A.D. 330.

VIII. to XI. The clergy at this time were permitted to marry. These laws confer certain privileges on them and their sons.

They were passed in the years 343, 349, 354.

<sup>4</sup> See Bingham, book iv. chap. iv.

XII. Decreed, that bishops were to be tried by their brethren, and not by any secular tribunal <sup>5</sup>.

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This is one of the most important laws of the whole code, and may be said to have been the foundation of that subsequent claim of the Church of Rome which agitated the principal countries of Europe so many ages after its enactment. It may also be regarded as the origin of the disputes in our own country between our Henry II. and Edward I. and the Archbishops of Canterbury. Enacted by Constantius, A.D. 355.

XIII. XIV. The privileges of the clergy of the Church of Rome, and of their sons, are secured to them.

These privileges were exemption from certain charges and offices; not power and authority over other Churches and their clergy. Constantius and Julian, A.D. 357.

XV. The privileges of the Churches and clergy do not exempt their landed property from all tribute. A.D. 360.

XVI. It exempted the clergy more universally in every place, city, town, castle, and municipality, from the offices which interfered with their religious observances. "We are convinced," says the decree, "that our government derives greater advantage from the discharge of the duties of religion than from any personal service."

It was passed in the last year of the life of Constantius, and is dated at Antioch, A.D. 361.

XVII. Wealthy plebeians were not to be ordained on any account.

Valentinian and Valens, A.D. 364.

XVIII. The privileges of the clergy, which had been granted by Constantius, and rescinded by Julian, were restored.

XIX. Allowed the clergy, who were subject to the municipal regulations of their own cities, to be recalled to the performance of their civil duties, if they had not been ordained ten years.

<sup>5</sup> See Gothofred's note, p. 38.

XX. Regulations respecting the lives, morals, &c. of the ecclesiastics and the professed.

This was a law of Valentinian the Elder. It was addressed to Damasus, and publicly read in the churches of Rome, A.D. 370 <sup>6</sup>.

XXI. Distinguishes between the privileges allowed to the clergy in the matter of municipal regulations.

It was a law of Gratian on the subject, as it stood before and after the commencement of his reign, A.D. 371.

XXII. Confirms and extends the preceding decree, A.D. 372.

XXIII. Ordains that presbyters of Churches are to be tried, in ecclesiastical matters, by the presbyters of the diocese in which they live, and that the presbyters are to be officially summoned for that purpose. If, however, they are criminally accused, the presbyters must then be tried, not by an ecclesiastical, but by a secular tribunal.

By Valens and Valentinian, A.D. 376. The civil law at this period ruled equally, as it ought always to do, both the Church and State. Baronius, who lived in the palmy, though somewhat declining, days of the usurpation of the Church of Rome, declares that Valens never prospered "after the enactment of this unjust law." The bishops had power to judge in civil cases, if the opposing litigants agreed to refer their causes to the episcopal tribunals. Constantine, by the law added to the end of the Theodosian code, is said to have ordained, that the decisions of the bishops should then have the force of law, and the governors of the provinces were to execute their decrees. This part of the law is probably not a forgery, but Gothofred, contrary to the opinion of Selden, proves that another part of the law is certainly a forgery; namely, that bishops might decide in secular causes, on the appeal of one only of the interested parties. Bingham conjectures, that the lay-chancel-

<sup>6</sup> Semler, who has been of great assistance to me in this brief abstract of the Theodosian code, has here mistaken the purport of the twentieth and some following laws.— See Semler, Comment. Hist. tom. ii. p. 210.

lors of the bishops originated in the abundance of civil and secular causes brought before them by the consent of both parties. He is of opinion that the layman heard the secular, while the bishop retained the ecclesiastical causes.

XXIV. Extends to the inferior ministers of the Church the exemptions from public duties, the readers, door-keepers, &c.

It was a law of Gratian, A.D. 377.

XXV. The bishop who, by neglecting to preach, offends the laws of God, commits sacrilege<sup>7</sup>, A.D. 380.

XXVI. The watchers, door-keepers<sup>8</sup> of the Churches, to be exempted from public personal services, A.D. 381.

XXVII. XXVIII. Laws respecting the deaconesses<sup>9</sup>.

XXIX. Confirms the former privileges granted by the emperors to the Churches.

A law of Arcadius and Honorius<sup>1</sup>, A.D. 395.

XXX. An enforcement of the former law two years after, A.D. 397.

XXXI. Prohibits and punishes the violent attacks on the Churches, which were made by the enemies of the orthodox. If the bishops who were assailed pardoned the insults offered them, the civil magistrate was still to be required to prevent and punish them.

The singular extent to which the mutual hatreds and exasperations of the maintainers of opposite opinions among the Christians of this period led them, may be seen from this strange law of Honorius, A.D. 398.

<sup>7</sup> The first paragraph of Gothofred gives this interpretation to the obscure wording of the law, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> The door-keepers, "ostiari," were placed among the inferior clergy by the council of Laodicea. In the time of Justinian there were one hundred in the Church of Constantinople. Their duty was to guard the doors, and (*probably*) to make the distinction between the faithful and catechumens and excommunicated. — Bingham, book iii. chap. vi. sect. 3.

<sup>9</sup> For a very interesting account of

the deaconesses, see Bingham, book ii. chap. xxii. Their office was very primitive, Rom. xvi. 1. They were to visit the sick, and converse with the female catechumens, &c. Their order ceased in the Church about the eleventh century. It might be usefully revived.

<sup>1</sup> Quia temporibus nostris addi potius reverentiæ cupimus, quam ex his quæ olim præstita sunt, immutari. A maxim which all Christian rulers may well adopt.

XXXII. The clergy may be chosen from the monks, if no legal objection can be offered to them, A.D. 398.

XXXIII. The clergy are to be maintained by the district in which they serve; and according to the extent and resources of the various districts, their number is to be extended by the bishop, A.D. 398.

XXXIV. Imposes certain fines on those who violate the privileges of the Churches, 399.

XXXV. An obscure law concerning the distance at which the clergy were to reside from the place where they were deposed, A.D. 400.

XXXVI. XXXVII. The clergy who engage in commerce were to receive no income from the Church, A.D. 401.

XXXVIII. XL. The clergy to be free from all public burthens, excepting the ordinary canonical taxations. They are to be exempted from the extraordinary taxes called super-indictions<sup>2</sup>.

XLI. The bishops alone are to take cognizance of the crimes of the clergy, A.D. 412.

XLII. Only five hundred *parabolani*, or attendants of the sick, are to be allowed in Alexandria<sup>3</sup>, A.D. 416.

XLIII. Amendment of the preceding law, A.D. 418.

XLIV. The mothers, kindred, sisters, and ante-ordination wives of the clergy may live with them; but not women who, being none of these, profess to devote themselves with strict continence to the service of the clergy, and associate with them most unreservedly as their companions<sup>4</sup>. They were called Subintroductæ, A.D. 420.

XLV. The customs of antiquity, and the ancient canons, were to be observed in the Churches, A.D. 421.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of this subject, the taxation of the clergy, the fruitful source of much subsequent controversy, is discussed in Bingham, bk. v. chap. ii. There were few privileges and demands of the clergy, in the ages between Constantine and Luther, that had not been granted, either in fact or principle, by the laws of the Christian emperors.

<sup>3</sup> It is not worth while to discuss here the reasons of some of these strange laws. The curious reader is

referred, once for all, to Gothofred and Bingham.

<sup>4</sup> Chrysostom, though in some unquotable language, as well as many other fathers (referred to by Bingham, l. vi. c. iii. sec. 13; also by Gothofred, *in loco*), severely censure this practice. The last discussor of the subject is Heinichen, in his thirteenth excursus, in the third volume of his edition of Eusebius, p. 418, who has bestowed on the matter all the characteristic labour and diligence of his countrymen.

XLVI. The privileges of the Churches and the clergy to be maintained, A.D. 425. BOOK II.  
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XLVII. The injuries done to the Churches by the tyrant John, who had decreed that the clergy should be judged by the secular power, are removed by this edict of Valentinian<sup>5</sup>, A.D. 425.

*Title of the third, "On Monks."*

This consists of only two contradictory laws :—the first, of Valentinian, A.D. 390, confines monks to their deserts and solitudes. The second, of Theodosius the Great, two years afterwards, permits them to appear in the cities of the empire.

The whole of the subjects of the *fourth division of the laws* of this book are omitted in the code of Justinian. It consists of six laws only. The peace in many cities having been disturbed by public disputations on religious matters, between the orthodox and their opponents, this fourth title is against those who thus publicly contend about religion. The laws which it contains were principally enacted to prevent the Catholics from exciting the people by appeals and declamations against the Arians, whom Valentinian the Younger, under the influence of his mother, Justina, endeavoured to make equal with the orthodox.

I. The first law enacts that those who collect mobs shall be capitally punished, A. D. 386.

II. III. Are to the same effect: the former, A. D. 388; the latter, 392.

IV. The officers of the emperor are here charged to avoid all conventicles, under pain of the confiscation of their goods.

In this edict, the emperor uses the strange and most unjustifiable language, "That all should be deprived of their rank who shall sacrilegiously dare to oppose the authority of our divinity<sup>6</sup>," A.D. 404.

<sup>5</sup> See Gothofred's note.

<sup>6</sup> See Jortin's remarks on Eccles. Hist., "On the title of *Deity* assumed by the Emperors." The Bishop of Rome followed only an imperial precedent when similar blasphemous titles of honour were granted him by his

blind followers. The time has arrived when all such absurdities ought to cease. Qui sacrilego animo (are the words of this decree) auctoritatem nostri numinis ausi fuerint expugnare.—Gothofred, vol. vi. p. 102.

V. VI. Are to the same effect, and were passed the same year.

We are now brought to the most important of these laws.

*The title of the fifth division is, "On Heretics."*

This part of the code is the foundation of all the subsequent enactments against the new crime and the new criminals. The whole of the laws of this title are admirably condensed in the premonition, or paratitlon, of Gothofred, to which I wish to refer the reader.

The first section of his introduction relates to the epithets given to heretics in the public laws enacted against them. They were called "profane enemies to God's law;" they are "mad and wretched conspirators against God." All are heretics who differ from the minutest article of the Catholic faith—whether from doctrine or discipline. They are called "obstinate," "insane," "mad." They are "haters of God and man." Their minds are "profane," "polluted," "perfidious," "perverse." Their religion is "detestable and execrable."—Is it not evident that *the frequent repetition of such epithets in the public laws must have produced a public mind, temper, and feelings, which would desire and approve the most unjustifiable intolerance?* Can we be surprised, that when language of this nature was used by the imperial legislature, thousands and tens of thousands must have been deterred from that unbounded freedom of thought which is the privilege of all mankind, and which is the best friend to Christianity; when the man who dared to think, and to arrive at conclusions not perhaps already sanctioned by the Catholic Church, was to be haunted through life with such terms and epithets of disgrace and reproach?

As heretics were thus overpowered with epithets of ignominy, so also the opinion which was deemed to be heresy was called "sacrilege"—"sinister religion"—"the wickedness of sects"—"superstition"—"vanity"—"institutions of vice," and "poison."

The persons who oppose heresy, and were members of the Catholic Church, were the only orthodox. The only right faith is the Catholic communion, discipline, Church, religion, and holiness.

The list of heresies against which, and respecting which, these things are to be done or said, fills a folio page. The delighter in compound epithets will be much gratified by studying the manner in which a single word is so often made to express a whole creed of real or supposed error<sup>7</sup>. Heretics had their religious orders of all kinds, assemblies, churches, litanies, services, &c., as well as the Catholics. What a prodigious mass of learning and information has been destroyed by the crusade which has been so successfully carried on against them, in consequence of the laws we are considering!

The remedies for heresy are twofold: one is *punishment*, the other *argument*. Happy will it be for the world when the latter alone shall be regarded as the cure for error; and the command of our Lord be obeyed by all Churches that wisely and firmly do their duty in opposing heresy—"let both grow together until the harvest." The field of the Churches should be cultivated so as to increase the growth of the wheat of truth, and lessen the space which may be occupied by the tares of error: but the labourer in those fields must not hope to eradicate the tares, by plucking them out by zeal or violence.

Before the heretics were punished, they were invited in three ways to the recantation of error,—by the *edicts* which commanded; the *penance* which insulted; or by the *personal conference*, which increased their obstinacy, by inflaming their pride.—If these three modes of persuasion were ineffectual, they were then to be convinced by the prohibitions and punishments which were faithfully retained by the ecclesiastical and civil rulers of states and Churches, from the age of Theodosius; till the opposition to the principal offender in the age of Luther. They were to be driven from the cities, and forbidden to discuss the propositions which they believed, but which the Church condemned. Their punishment was to be proportioned to their crime; as deportation, exile, or death. Bishops and priests were not to be ordained by heretics. Their own bishops and clergy were not to be entitled to bear those honourable names. Their goods were to be confiscated; neither were they to have the general privileges of the Catholics. They were to be severely fined;

<sup>7</sup> See Gothofred, tom. vi. p. 106.

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and in the places to which they were banished, they were to live in solitude. The assemblies of heretics for the worship of God according to their own notions were prohibited; and they were called by the endearing terms of "unpropitious,—damnable,—nefarious,—profane,—unlawful,—deadly conventicles."

Heretics were forbidden to meet either in public or private places, openly or secretly, avowedly to worship. They were forbidden to meet either by day or by night; either without or within the walls of any town or city, under the various penalties of proscription, exile, or death; and these laws were to be observed by all judges and magistrates of provinces, towns, and cities, under the penalty of loss of rank and office, and other censures. The houses, or fields, or lands, where they met, were to be confiscated, or given up to the churches and clergy near them. The owners or tenants thereof were to be variously punished with exile, fine, or death; and the Catholics were invested with power to interrupt, discover, and disturb all such assemblies. The holders of heretical opinions were to be subjected to the same punishment as their authors.

The churches of heretics are called not only conventicles, but houses of profane teaching, resemblances, and mockeries of churches; and heretics, therefore, are not permitted to build them either in towns, cities, villages, or fields, or in any private grounds. If they shall be found so to have done, both the churches and the land about them are to be given up to the Catholics, with all their plate and ecclesiastical appendages. The Novatians alone may hold their churches and church-yards.

The punishments to be personally inflicted upon the heretics themselves varied according to their obstinacy. Those who, after much patience, reasoning, and discussion, gave hopes of amendment, were not to be dealt with most severely; but *the general punishments were eleven*. First. They were to be declared infamous. Secondly. To be branded with other names of reproach. Thirdly. To be removed from all intercourse with the faithful, having no benefit of the public law, nor common privileges, laws, and customs as citizens, but to be regarded as entire strangers. Fourthly. They were to be prohibited from attaining to any dignity in the army, the law,

the court, and the provinces; "for no other tie," said Honorius<sup>8</sup>, "shall bind me to those who separate from me in faith and religion." Fifthly. Heretics could make no will, except in certain cases; and all their goods and debts, without regard to time, are the property of the public treasury and the people. The sovereign himself cannot remit this penalty—an enactment which was not only in this age a singular instance of self-limited power, but which greatly strengthened, in after-ages, the claims of the ecclesiastical over the civil authority. Sixthly. Heretics could make no gifts nor receive any. Seventhly. Nor buy nor sell. Eighthly. Nor contract. Ninthly. They were proscribed, banished, and transported, having been first sometimes scourged. Tenthly. When they were thus banished from their homes in the cities and provinces, they were to be driven from all places—from the precincts of cities and meetings of honourable men; and generally, though not uniformly, from the assemblies of the Catholics. Their goods were to be confiscated unless they changed; and every heresiarch, with his favourers and friends, was to be beaten with leaden mallets, and assured of the Divine displeasure. Eleventhly. The punishment of death is not enacted by any express law, as a general penalty for heresy, excepting by one of Theodosius the Great, A.D. 382; in which this last infliction is enacted against the Encratites, Saccofori, Hydroparastatæ, and Manichees in general. His sons confirmed this decree, and extended the punishment to the procurers of the means of meeting to heretics, such as the Eunomians and Montanists. The clergy of these parties were to be subjected to death if they returned to their homes, or to any cities after their banishment for their heresy. The punishment of death, also, was to be inflicted on the revivers<sup>9</sup> of the laws which once permitted superstition, on the excitors of sedition, on pretence of religion, on certain new heresies, on heretics who, after condemnation to other punishments, come too much into public, and on those whose obstinacy is very pertinacious. Such

<sup>8</sup> See law xlii.

<sup>9</sup> I do not understand the expression of Gothofred, p. 109. *Codicum item recentatores noxiorum quando-*

*que capite plecti jussi.*—Law xliv. [Is it not an error or a misprint, for "retentatores?"]

were the first-fruits of the germ which Constantine planted in the vineyard of the Church. The one fatal law which he had passed against Arius was the precedent. The Theodosian code, with its follower, and a legion of evils, was to succeed.

Yet these enactments were not all that were passed to crush the heretics and prevent the growth of heresy. Public accusations against heresy were encouraged as against a public crime. Spies and informers were called upon without any of the supposed infamy attendant upon that employment to lay informations. Inquisitors—in this abominable code the ominous word so fatally known in after-ages makes its first appearance—and officers, especially appointed for the purpose, were commissioned and sent forth to discover, and drag forth from their hiding-places, the miserable heretics, and to bring them to trial,—not merely the seditious and furious Donatists, the immoral, or those suspected of immorality, but heretics of whatever name or description. Slaves were permitted to accuse their masters of heresy, and to pass from their masters to the Church. If their masters required them to attend an heretical assembly, they might desert to the Church, and obtain their liberty at the same time. Obedience by slaves to heretical masters, in matters of heresy, was to be punished by the law. Power was granted to masters to punish heretical husbandmen or slaves with the loss of the third part of their wages. Severe punishments were denounced against all who assisted, sheltered, or concealed a heretic. Neither wives nor women were spared. The children of heretics, unless they returned to the Church, were to lose their patrimony. The books of heretics were to be sought for and burnt, and their holders to be severely punished. All imperial laws, rescripts, edicts, pragmatic sanctions, and constitutions, by whatever name they are known, which may have been passed in favour of heretics, are to be of no effect, and as if they had never been enacted.

Such are the principal laws of this part of the Theodosian code against heretics and heresy. They are sixty-six in number. None of Constantius or Valens, who were reputed heretics, are among them. There are fifteen of Theo-

dosius the Great, and eighteen of Honorius. The rest vary in number<sup>1</sup>.

I shall mention, in its order, the substance of each law in this title, according to its date, that a more clear idea may be formed of the age of Theodosius.

I. That the privileges granted to the clergy should pertain to Catholics alone, not to heretics and schismatics<sup>2</sup>.

In the Justinian code schismatics are not named, but they were added by Theodosius. This law was enacted, A.D. 326, one year after the Council of Nice.

II. That their Churches and cemeteries should be restored to the Novatians<sup>3</sup>.

This was also enacted, A.D. 326.

III. The assemblies of the Manichees to be prohibited, their teachers heavily fined, and their houses ordered to be confiscated<sup>4</sup>.

A.D. 372. Between the date of this and the last, forty-six years intervened, during which time no law was enacted against heretics, because Constantius favoured the sect. Julian brought them into collision with Catholics; and Jovian, from the shortness of his reign, and the internal and external tempests with which he had to contend, was unable to do more than abolish the acts of Julian.

IV. The first constitution of Gratian against heretics, which enacts severer penalties for the purpose of securing obedience to a former law, prohibiting the assemblies of

<sup>1</sup> Gothofred has classed them thus:—

Laws of Constantine II. . . . .	2
— Valentinian . . . . .	1
— Gratian . . . . .	2
— Theodosius the Great . . . . .	15
— Valentinian II. . . . .	3
— Arcadius . . . . .	12
— Honorius . . . . .	18
— Theodosius, junior . . . . .	10
— Valentinian III. . . . .	3

<sup>2</sup> Privilegia clericis concessa, ad catholicos solos pertinere, non ad hæreticos et schismaticos.

cœmeteria relinquenda esse.  
<sup>4</sup> Manichæorum conventus prohibiti, doctoresque eorum graviter multari domusque confiscari jubentur.

<sup>3</sup> Novatianis suas ecclesias suaque

heretics, and which had been avoided, partly by the dissimulation on the part of the judges, and partly by the knavery of the profane (heretics).

Between A.D. 376 and 378.

V. The second constitution of Gratian against heretics.—By this constitution the assemblies or meetings, not only of the Manichees and Eunomians, but of all heretics whatever, are prohibited. They are forbidden to publish their opinions, or to receive any as disciples, A.D. 379.

VI. The first of Theodosius against heretics.—This especially names the Photinians, Arians, and Eunomians, whose meetings are to be prohibited, and all churches throughout the empire <sup>5</sup> to be restored to the orthodox bishops, that is, those who professed the Nicene creed, A.D. 381.

The first council of Constantinople held the same year.

VII. The second constitution of Theodosius against heretics, but especially the Manichees.—By this constitution disgrace and infamy are inflicted upon the Manichees. The right of making wills and gifts is taken away. The liberty of meeting together in towns, or cities, or any other place, under whatsoever name they class themselves, is denied. The catholic sons of Manichees are exempted from it.

VIII. The third constitution against Eunomians, Arians, Aëtians, who are prohibited from building churches in town or country <sup>6</sup> throughout the East, under pain of forfeiture.

IX. The fourth constitution of Theodosius, especially against the Manichees, enacting penalties against them for assembling together. Easter to be celebrated by them upon the same day as among the orthodox, A.D. 382.

X. The fifth constitution, especially against the Tasdrogitæ, who were to be thrust out of their churches, and not allowed to enter any other, A.D. 383.

XI. The sixth constitution, against heretics in general, forbidding all their assemblies, private or public, A.D. 383.

XII. Seventh constitution, against heretics in general, enacts severer penalties than the sixth upon the same persons, A.D. 383.

<sup>5</sup> Catholicæ ecclesiæ toto orbe red-  
dantur.

<sup>6</sup> In civitatibus vel agris.

XIII. Eighth constitution, against the same, decrees, that heretical ministers and teachers shall be expelled from the society of the faithful, and kept apart from the assemblies of the orthodox, A.D. 384.

XIV. Ninth constitution, chiefly against the Apollinarians, who are to be driven out of cities; and their bishops not to consecrate or even to preside over clergy, and not to assemble, A.D. 388.

XV. Same, forbidding to hold secret meetings in addition to the above, A.D. 388.

XVI. Tenth, chiefly against the Arians; allows them no power whatever to meet, A.D. 388.

XVII. Eleventh, chiefly against the Eunomians; depriving them of the right of making wills, or disposing of property, A.D. 389.

XVIII. Constitution of Theodosius and Valentinian, against the Manichees; the same as the last, A.D. 389.

XIX. Twelfth, against heretics in general; that all ranks of their clergy and readers be expelled from Constantinople and its environs, A.D. 389.

XX. Theodosius and Valentinian; no meetings of heretics to be allowed in the vicinity of Rome, A.D. 391.

XXI. Thirteenth constitution imposes a fine upon those who appoint heretical clergy, upon the clergy themselves, and the places of meeting, A.D. 392.

XXII. Fourteenth, depriving them of the power of making or confirming bishops, A.D. 394.

XXIII. Fifteenth or last, principally against, or addressed to, the Eunomians; restores to them testamentary rights, A.D. 394.

XXIV.<sup>7</sup> Re-enacts the laws of Theodosius.

XXV. In addition to the penalties enacted by his father, Theodosius, against the Eunomians, Arcadius deprives them of the right of serving in the army (*militandi*), of being witnesses, and making wills.

XXVI. All heretics forbidden to meet publicly or privately, secretly or openly, or to take the name of bishop.

XXVII. Re-enacts the twenty-third.

XXVIII. Defines heresy to be "the deviating in the least, from the decisions and discipline of the Catholic faith."

<sup>7</sup> The xxiv.—xxxiv. and xxxvith laws, are constitutions of Arcadius.

XXIX. Expels heretics from military honours and appointments, A.D. 395.

XXX. Confiscates all places used for heretical worship by whatever name called; the clergy to be expelled from Constantinople, and no meetings to be held, A.D. 396.

XXXI. Eunomians to be expelled the city.

XXXII. Also to be separated from society.

XXXIII. Apollinarian teachers to depart from the city quickly, and the places where they assembled to be confiscated, A.D. 397.

XXXIV. Expels Eunomians and Montanists from all the cities, and orders their books or writings to be burnt before their faces, A.D. 398.

XXXV. Forbids assemblies of the Manichees, A.D. 399.

XXXVI. Restores to the Eunomians testamentary rights, and enacts severe penalties against their assemblies<sup>a</sup>.

XXXVII. A rescript against the Donatists, A.D. 400.

XXXVIII. Represses the Manichees and Donatists, and enacts former laws under greater penalties, A.D. 405.

XXXIX. Donatists confessed or convicted, to be fined without abatement.

XL. Enacts severe penalties against the Donatists, Manichees, and Priscillianists, A.D. 407.

XLI. Offers forgiveness to all heretics who shall embrace the Catholic faith and doctrine, A.D. 407.

XLII. Disallows connexion with all who differ from the emperor in faith and doctrine, A.D. 408.

XLIII. Enacts the most severe punishments against Donatists, Manichees, Priscillianists, and Gentiles.

XLIV. Includes the Jews.

XLV. Forbids meetings, confiscates the places of assembling, exiles the clergy, and deprives them of their possessions, A.D. 408.

XLVI. Confirms the laws and penalties against the Donatists, other heretics, Jews, and Pagans, A.D. 409.

XLVII. Caution against offending, A.D. 409.

XLVIII. Against the Montanists, Priscillianists, and others, A.D. 410. By Theodosius, junior.

XLIX. Renders the Eunomians intestable.

<sup>a</sup> The xxxvi. xxxvii. to lvith, eighteen constitutions of Honorius.

L. Confiscates their possessions.

LI. Confirms the rescript against all heretics, who are to be punished and proscribed.

LII. Enacts severe public and private penalties against the Donatists, unless they become of the orthodox faith, A.D. 412.

LIII. Against Jovinian, whom it exiles; and threatens more severe measures if he continue obstinate. (Obstinacy first named as aggravating the crime of heresy.)

LIV. Re-enacts all the penalties against the Donatists, A.D. 414.

LV. Confirms the enactments of Marcellinus, in 411, against the Donatists.

LVI. Proscribes the meetings and rites of all heretics, under pain of proscription and blood (*sanguinis*), A.D. 415.

LVII. Prohibits the Montanists from holding assemblies, or ordaining clergy. Theodosius, junior.

LVIII. Against the Eunomians; re-enacting all the former penalties.

LIX. Against the Manichees, Phryges, Priscillianists, Arians, Macedonians, Eunomians, Novatians, and others, who should be punished if they disobeyed general councils, A.D. 423.

LX. Confirms the pains and penalties against all heretics, Jews, and Pagans.

LXI. Excepts from the general censure on the heretics certain military officers who had purchased their appointments, A.D. 423.

LXII. Expels from the city of Rome heretics, Manichees, and schismatics, A.D. 425.

LXIII. Against all who differ from the Catholic faith, and enacts proscription against the authors, participators, and favourers of heresy, A.D. 425.

LXIV. Orders all heretics to be completely banished from the cities of Italy, A.D. 425.

LXV. Re-enacts against all heretics former penalties and laws, A.D. 428.

LXVI. Founded upon the decrees of the Council of Ephesus, and chiefly against the name, writings, and assemblies of the Nestorians. By this law the writings of the Nestorians are to be diligently sought for and publicly burnt.

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The Council of Ephesus was held four years prior to the passing of this law.

The sixth division of the Theodosian code relates to the privileges of baptism. It contains seven laws, passed at various intervals between A.D. 373 and 413. They were the result of controversies which are not even yet entirely obsolete. The second law of Honorius is against those who rebaptize. The fourth law of this division punishes rebaptization as heresy. It was passed in the year 405.

The seventh division contains twenty-nine laws, and relates to apostates from Christianity, who are to be treated as heretics. It contains eight laws. Apostates are of three kinds, those who respectively become Pagans, Jews, or Manichees.

They were enacted between A.D. 381 and A.D. 426<sup>9</sup>.

The eighth division relates to Jews, idolaters, and Samaritans. The Jews, under the Christian emperors, were permitted to have their primates, sanhedrims, and synagogues. They were to be protected from insult, and were allowed also to continue in their office the Apostles who collected tribute from the various congregations; but by the laws of this division of the Theodosian code, which are forty-seven in number, no new synagogues could be built, no intermarriages were permitted, no Jew could serve in the army, neither could they be made to serve in other offices. It cannot be necessary to detail these laws at any length. They are all redolent of the absurdity of those who would regulate religion and opinion as dependent on the will of an emperor, instead of the laws of God, and the operations of

<sup>9</sup> Mr. James, in his *Romance of Attila*, justly observes, that Christianity, though now established both in the Eastern and Western empires, was far from universal; and even in the minds of its most enthusiastic votaries was strangely mingled with the picturesque superstitions of a former creed. The man who was often a

Christian in belief, was consequently sometimes a Pagan in many of his habits and familiar expressions. Mr. James gives a beautiful account of the attachment of a Pagan village to the worship of Jupiter, and the disturbing of a sacrifice by the soldiers of the Emperor Attila.—Vol. i. p. 8, et seq.

the human mind. They breathe only the intolerance of the effeminate and unphilosophical ruler, invested with arbitrary power.

The ninth division commands that no Jew should possess a Christian slave. It consists of five laws, enacted between A.D. 330 and A.D. 423. The Justinian code extended this law to the Pagans. The second law is one of Constantine, A.D. 336, and ordains, that a Jew who circumcised a purchased Christian, should be put to death.

The tenth division relates to the Pagan people, also to lustrations, temples, rites, sacrifices. It contains most valuable illustrations of the history of the dying contest between the two religions. It comprises twenty-five laws. Gothofred's Paratitlon to this division is peculiarly valuable. It is not, however, necessary to do more than to refer to the several laws by which Paganism was overthrown. They present a curious and instructive detail of the manner in which a powerful and most influential religion was unable to resist persecution; which was the bloody cradle in which Christianity, the true religion, was nursed and fostered. When Constantine embraced Christianity, he tolerated Paganism, and only took from it its cruel and haughty ascendancy. Successive laws weakened, depressed, insulted, overthrew, and at length prohibited with contempt and retaliating cruelty, the whole faith and ritual of the ancient worship of the former deities of Olympus.

I subjoin a brief abstract of these laws.

I. Permits public but not private sacrifices. Constantine, A.D. 321.

II. "Let superstition cease. Let the madness of sacrifices be abolished<sup>1</sup>," A.D. 341.

III. "Although we desire that all superstition should be utterly abolished, yet we permit the temples which are already built on the outside of the walls of our cities to remain untouched," A.D. 341.

<sup>1</sup> Cesset superstitio: sacrificiorum aboleatur insania.

IV. All are to abstain from offering sacrifice. The offenders to be slain<sup>2</sup>.

V. Nocturnal sacrifices to be abolished.

VI. Capital punishment is decreed against those who either assist at the sacrifices or worship images, A.D. 356.

VII. All attendants on the mystic rites to be proscribed, A.D. 381.

VIII. The Temple of Osdroena to be spared, provided the people do not sacrifice, A.D. 382.

IX. Law against divining by sacrifices, A.D. 385.

X. More severe law against sacrifices and Pagan worshippers, A.D. 391.

XI. Another, A.D. 391.

XII. All Pagan worship prohibited, A.D. 392.

XIII. None to have permission to offer any sacrifices, which are now stigmatized as abominable, nor to celebrate any Pagan rite, A.D. 395.

XIV. All the privileges of the Pagan priesthood are to be abolished. Arcadius and Honorius, A.D. 396.

XV. Though the sacrifices were abolished, the public ornaments of the temples were to be preserved, A.D. 399.

XVI. The temples in the open fields to be destroyed without crowds or tumults<sup>3</sup>. Arcadius, A.D. 399.

XVII. The ancient games, festivals, &c., but without sacrifices, or any damnable superstition, to be continued, A.D. 399.

This permission has been said to be the origin of our common wakes.

XVIII. The temples of Paganism not to be destroyed, A.D. 399.

XIX. The revenues of the temples to be given to the army. Images and altars to be destroyed. The temples to be preserved to the public. Certain solemnities prohibited, A.D. 408.

XX. The last law of Honorius from Ravenna against the Pagan priests, A.D. 415<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Volumus cunctos sacrificiis abstinere—quod si quis aliquid hujusmodi perpetraverit, gladio ultore sternatur.

<sup>3</sup> His enim dejectis atque sublati,

omnis superstitionis materia consumetur.

<sup>4</sup> Gothofred's notes are here very valuable.

XXI. Those who are polluted with Pagan crimes and superstitions are to be expelled from all posts of honour in the army and the law <sup>5</sup>, A.D. 416.

XXII. "If any Pagans remain," says this law, "let them obey these laws <sup>6</sup>," A.D. 423.

XXIII. "If any Pagans shall be found sacrificing, though they deserve death, let them be only punished with confiscation and exile <sup>7</sup>," A.D. 423.

XXIV. Pagans who live quietly are not to be disturbed or insulted <sup>8</sup>, A.D. 423.

XXV. The final law of Theodosius. If any cursed Pagan offer sacrifice, he is to be put to death. All their temples are to be destroyed, and the cross erected on their ruins <sup>9</sup>, A.D. 426.

The eleventh and last division of the Theodosian code comprises only three laws, and treats generally on religion. The first is a law of Arcadius and Honorius, of the year 399. It refers to the ecclesiastical tribunals, and the causes which are to be tried by them. The bishops were empowered by this law to judge only in questions of religion. All other causes pertaining either to political, public, or civil matters <sup>1</sup>, were to be submitted to the ordinary tribunals.

The second is a law of Honorius, A.D. 405, and was intended, by a declaration of the unity of the Church, to promote union among Christians. It does not, however, make the distinction between the two. There may be *unity* in an army when it either attacks and conquers, or is defeated by an enemy; but each individual in that army may dislike and

<sup>5</sup> Qui profano Pagani ritus errore seu crimine polluantur, &c. Such is the progress and fall of the Pagan creed;—ascendancy, toleration, depression, overthrow, insult, hatred, prohibition.

<sup>6</sup> Paganos, qui supersunt, quanquam jam nullos esse credamus, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Si aliquando in execrandis dæmonum sacrificiis comprehensi, &c.

<sup>8</sup> This was more tolerant.

<sup>9</sup> Gothofred shows, in his notes, that the Pagan temples being purified, were converted to Christian uses.

Christian Churches were generally, or at least often, built over heathen

temples. St. Paul's Church, in London, if the tradition be true, was built upon the ruins of the temple of Diana; St. Peter's, Westminster, upon those of Apollo. At York, the ruins of the temple of Bellona are still seen under the pavement of the cathedral.

<sup>1</sup> Ceteras vero causas, quæ ad ordinarios cognitores, vel ad usum publici juris pertinent, legibus oportet audiri.

On the office of 'cognitor,' under the emperors of this period, see Gothofred, vol. vi. p. 301. The cognitor was an officer who was empowered to enquire into the controversies and disputes of the people.

hate his fellow, and so there is no *union*. Identity of discipline and doctrine promotes unity; but holiness and love must be added to discipline and doctrine, to produce union.

The third law is remarkable as defining the Catholic faith. There can be little doubt that much difficulty must have been experienced by the cognitors in discovering whether any particular individual was orthodox or catholic. Many would be accused of heresy who were innocent of that offence, and it consequently became necessary to define the terms by which they were to be judged. It was accordingly enacted, that whatever antiquity ordained, and the religious authority of princes had appointed, was to be regarded as the catholic faith. This law became the precedent for extending the definitions of the faith, and thus multiplying the number of heresies and heretics. At the time of the Council of Nice, the holding of the Homoeousian doctrine alone was sufficient to make a man a catholic. Antiquity was a vague term, and described an authority to which every sect, party, and heresiarch, unhesitatingly, and at all times, appeals; and the edicts of princes, to a Christian, are of no authority whatever as a guide to a religious enquirer. The law in question was an abridgment of a larger mandate of Honorius and Theodosius; but both the smaller and larger decrees were equally inefficacious to prevent the restlessness of the human mind. New opinions prevailed, and the attempt to repress them by other means than the vigilance of the bishops and clergy to prevent error from contaminating their several flocks, was useless. The result was persecution.

An appendix on the subject of episcopal authority is added by Gothofred. It refers principally to certain laws, which were said to have been enacted by Valentinian; these are generally given up as the forgeries of a later period.

Before we proceed to consider the enactments of the code of Justinian on the subject of heretics and heresy, we must enquire for a moment into the authority and force of the code of Theodosius<sup>2</sup>.

That code was received with equal veneration and respect both by the East and West. An edict was published im-

<sup>2</sup> See, for the contents of this, Gothofred's *Prolegomena*, vol. i. p. 192, especially chapter v.

mediately on its completion, commanding, that this alone should be the law of the empire. It was received by the Ostrogoths in Italy, and by the Vandals in Africa. It became the foundation of the Breviary of Anianus, the chancellor of Alaric. While its authority was in great measure superseded in the East by the code of Justinian, the Theodosian code remained in full force in the West. Roman Gaul was governed by it. The barbarous tribes who gradually took possession of the frontier and then of the interior provinces of the empire, incorporated it with their own laws. It was called the Commonitory of the empire, because it was the especial mandate relating to all duties, and was addressed by the highest authority to each judge, officer, and magistrate in the empire, to remind and direct them in their official proceedings<sup>3</sup>. It became the law to the Gauls, to Spain under the Visigoths, and its influence in the persecution of heretics and punishment of heresy, has been more permanent in that country than in any other throughout Europe. It formed the basis of the Burgundian, Frank, and Longobardic codes, throughout Italy. The Theodosian code, in short, may be said to be the foundation of the whole civil law of Europe, except among the Northern tribes, which had so uniformly established an autonomy of their own; that they submitted to no jurisprudence which originated in the will of any individual, whether chief or emperor; but who were governed by the laws which emanated from among themselves, as such laws were deemed to be essential to the public happiness, and arose from the necessities of society, and circumstances of the passing hour. Though the remark of Jortin be true, that "the laws against heretics, collected in the Theodosian code, are a shameful monument of the persecuting anti-Christian spirit which broke forth in the fourth century, and grew more and more violent in the following times<sup>4</sup>," yet the last influence of paganism

<sup>3</sup> The Commonitory or Universal Warning, Epistle, or direction against heresy, was published about the same time as the Theodosian code. If the Churchmen of the age of Theodosius had been contented with urging the claims of the Episcopal Churches to the allegiance and attachment of Christians in the manner in which

our modern Churchmen are contented to do, without any appeal to the civil power, heresy would have been lessened, persecution by the orthodox prevented, the usurpations of the ecclesiastical power diminished, and the domination of Papacy unknown. — Concerning it, see Gothof. p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. p. 264.

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perished under its enactments. The prophecies which declared the universal establishment of the religion of Him who said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," were fulfilled by the follies and errors of men, though they ought rather to have been accomplished by their virtues and their wisdom. So it has, however, been, and so it always will be, that even the wrath and wickedness of man, whether Christian or anti-Christian, shall further the one great plan of the Almighty, who has declared, that the human race shall eventually become the fold of the one great Shepherd. Julian endeavoured, in vain, to roll back the tide of Christianity. Jovian, his successor, Valens, and Valentinian, took no active measures, either in the East or West, against paganism. Gratian was more zealous. He ventured to offend the last prejudices of the Roman senate, who identified the honour of the Roman name with the homage of the empire to the Goddess of Victory, by ordering the altar of Victory to be removed from the senate-house. He undid the labours of Julian, by resuming the lands which Julian had restored to the temples, and putting down every where the establishments which Julian had restored. Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, and Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, were his counsellors and directors in these measures. Symmachus pleaded before the emperor in vain, though he was attended by a deputation from the senate; and appealed to his sovereign by the victory and renown of their ancestors, to venerate the gods under whom their great achievements had been effected. The reply of Ambrose was unanswerable, that the God of Providence was the author of all good, and not the idols of wood and stone, whom they and their fathers ignorantly worshipped. At length the greatest victory was obtained which is recorded in the history of this great conflict of opinions. The senate at Rome<sup>3</sup> voted that Jupiter should be worshipped no longer, and that Christ was the God of the empire<sup>4</sup>. The conduct of the monks of Tours, with Martin their bishop, of Marcellus in Syria, and of the tumultuary mobs in the provinces and cities who

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 388.

<sup>4</sup> I prefer the declaration and the joy of Prudentius to the cold sarcasms of our great historian, who attributes

the vote of the senate to unworthy motives, and not to the triumph of truth, after its long and arduous struggle.

commenced the destruction of the temples and the persecution of their supporters, was however scandalous and unjustifiable<sup>7</sup>. The last shedding of blood took place in defence of the ancient follies. The rural population in some districts took a wild revenge upon the destroyers of the temples. The temple of Serapis, in Egypt, more particularly, was not destroyed without an exasperating series of attacks and defences; and the pagans of Gaza, and Ascalon, and Berytus, and some other cities, revenged the demolition of their own places of worship by burning the Churches of the Christians<sup>8</sup>. The excesses of the populace, however, whether directed against the synagogues of the Jews, the conventicles of the heretics, the Churches of the orthodox<sup>9</sup>, or the temples of the pagans, were alike suppressed. Even the synagogues of the Jews, the class most hated and despised by all, were protected by a public edict of Theodosius; and one clause in the edict seems to include a prohibition of all acts of violence against any places of worship<sup>1</sup>. But with these tumults the last efforts of paganism were ended. In the year 391, Theodosius prohibited every act of pagan worship, under pecuniary and still severer penalties; and in the following year the offering of pagan sacrifice was declared to be equivalent to the crime of treason<sup>2</sup>. Symmachus and Libanius, however, the two principal pagans of the age, were honoured; the former with the rank of consul, the latter with the personal friendship of Theodosius; and a proof was thus given, that whatever severity might be shown towards the religious acts of the heathen worshipper, he should not be punished for quietly holding opinions which were not those of his sovereign. From this time we hear but little more of this once powerful religion. The laws which prevented its public worship and solemn ceremonies were rigidly observed; the persons of its votaries were unpunished; their opinions

<sup>7</sup> See Giesler, § 76, note 5.

<sup>8</sup> See Rufinus, Hist. Eccl. xi. 22—30.

<sup>9</sup> By a law of the Emperor Valentinian, the meetings of the heretics were to be called *conciliabula*, not *ecclesiæ*.—Cod. Theod. lib. xvi. tit. i. law 2.

<sup>1</sup> Qui sub Christianæ religionis nomine illicita quæque præsumunt, et destruere synagogas, atque expoliare

conantur, congruâ severitate cohibebit.—Cod. Theod. lib. xvi. tit. viii. law 9. Also see Gothofred's note on the causes of this law, vol. vi. p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Quod si quispiam immolare hostiam sacrificaturus audebit, aut spirantia exta consulere, ad exemplum majestatis reus . . . accipiat sententiam competentem; etiamsi nihil contra salutem principum aut de salute quaesierit.—Cod. Theod. lib. xvi. tit. x. law 12.

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were not questioned; their libels were disregarded; their lamentations and prognostics of ensuing evil were unnoticed. The peasantry yielded to the influence of their superiors; and the philosophers were either silent or convinced of the superiority of Christianity. Eleven years after the decree of Theodosius, which suppressed the pagan worship, the gladiatorial games were abolished with facility by Honorius<sup>3</sup>. Justinian, in a few years after the decree of Honorius, closed the schools of pagan philosophy at Athens; and then the very name of pagan ceased to be contrasted with that of Christian as an opposite or rival religion, and sunk into an epithet of contempt to describe the villagers and rustics who were too remote from cities to be affected with their religion, civilization, or improvement.

Before we close our review of this period, some notice might be reasonably expected of that remarkable person who might be called the last of the pagan persecutors of Christianity. Julian, the nephew of Constantine the Great, and son of Basilina, an Arian persecutress, was educated as a Christian by an Arian bishop, Eusebius of Nicomedia, a relation of his mother. The religion of Julian was of that most unphilosophical kind, which permits the human reason to interfere between the evidences and the discoveries of revelation respecting the nature of the Deity. Experience has fully shown, that most persons who are guilty of thus preferring the conclusions of their own minds to the declaration of Scriptural truths, gradually retrograde from holding a larger number of the more mysterious articles of their faith; until they lapse into infidelity itself. It is not improbable that Julian was made a pagan in the age in which he lived, by the same process of reasoning which makes men become deists in our own day. Instructed in Arianism by Eusebius, for whom he had little respect, he preferred the teaching of the speculative Platonists. Admitted to the office of reader, he publicly read the Scriptures in the Church of Nicomedia. Though he declares, in a letter to the Alexandrians, that he was a Christian till the twentieth year of his age, it was in that very year that he passed at once into paganism by being initiated into the mysteries at Ephesus.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. 404.

Four years after this, having passed the intermediate time at Constantinople and Milan, he was sent to study at Athens, where the dying absurdities of heathenism were dignified by the name of philosophy. Here he was known to Gregory Nazianzen, who predicted his future folly by observing, even there, his affected behaviour, his light carriage, and wandering eye, his haughty demeanour, and general impertinence<sup>4</sup>. Six years after this Constantius died, and Julian, who had distinguished himself by courage and military conduct, and who had been proclaimed emperor by his troops, in consequence of his success as a soldier, became sovereign of the empire. He had written against Christianity; and amidst all the vanity of that worst of all coxcombs—the coxcomb of philosophy, had displayed great talent, ceaseless energy, and much self-government<sup>5</sup>. The time, therefore, had now arrived, when the dignity of his situation should have induced him to substitute pride for vanity, and simplicity for affectation. Instead, however, of assuming the majesty of the judge, and the lofty courtesy of the ruler of the state, he carried with him to the throne the buffoonery of a joking scholar; and satirized the Christians, while he treated them with alternate cruelty and insult. Conscious that the former systems of persecution had failed to extirpate Christianity, he had recourse to new plans of action against the religion which he had once embraced, and now renounced and detested. He proclaimed unlimited toleration to all; and under the mask of freedom and equality, directed his arrows against Christianity. The pagans were commanded to open their temples for worship. The Arians and other enemies of the Church were recalled. (They ought never to have been banished.) If the emperor had been contented with these demonstrations of his impartiality, he might have healed the divisions of his people, and have been recorded to posterity

<sup>4</sup> “See what a pest the Roman empire nourishes in her own bosom.”

—Greg. Nazian. in *Julianum*, Orat. ii.

<sup>5</sup> Julian is the idol of Gibbon, who is, however, compelled to qualify all his praise by acknowledging the truth of the charge of affectation, which was the bane of the prince. The historian has laboured to the utmost to convince the world that the apostate was a great man; but what can we think of the

intellect which rejects the New Testament to consult the augurs, listen to oracles, and prefer the deities of Olympus to the Saviour whom Julian rejoiced to mention with contempt! Some of Gibbon's choicest insults are to be found in this chapter, as, when he speaks of the dull and obstinate understanding of Gallus embracing with implicit zeal the doctrines of Christianity.—Chapter xxiii.

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as a benefactor to his people; in spite of the foolery which made him sacrifice morning and evening to the moon and stars, and defile his inky fingers with the blood of the panting hearts which his own imperial hands tore forth from the dying victim. But the friend of falsehood is the enemy of truth; and where that enmity exists with the power to display or exert it, no crafty affectation can conceal its efforts. Believing that he was unable to destroy Christianity by the open violence and persecution of his predecessors, he began to assail it in another manner. Every argument which the promise or the actual bestowal of wealth, honour, or advancement, impress upon the wavering, the ambitious, or the timid; was urged upon his Christian subjects to induce them to follow the example of their sovereign, and become pagans. Those who refused compliance were treated, in common with the rest of the Christian community, with a calm and distant scorn, as persons of inferior judgment and weak intellect. They were degraded in public estimation. He commanded them to be called Galileans, unconscious that this epithet would soon become a title of honour to a people that despised reproach<sup>6</sup>. He forbade them to teach in schools. He removed them from all offices of rank, honour, and usefulness; and scornfully reminded them of those passages in the New Testament which forbid the followers of Christ from being anxious in the affairs of this world. The Christians were commanded to restore to the pagans the temples and their revenues; and the latter, as well as the Arians, were encouraged to perplex and injure the orthodox. The name of Christ was erased from the labarum; and while the God of Christianity prevented the fulfilment of the attempt of the emperor to overthrow the testimony of prophecy by building the temple of Jerusalem<sup>7</sup>; the oracles of Delos and Delphos, of Dodona and others<sup>8</sup>,

<sup>6</sup> I cannot learn the reason why Julian so much disliked the word Christian. Was it that he felt the repeating of the word to be a reproach to his apostasy? Gibbon says, somewhere in his notes, that the word Christian was invented at Antioch. This, too, is a sneer against Christianity. He could not be ignorant that the words of the original imply, that

the followers of Christ were called Christians by Divine command.

<sup>7</sup> After reading Warburton, Waddington, Lardner, Milman, and Gibbon, with their references, the sober Christian must conclude, that the defeat of the enterprise of Julian cannot be called a natural event.

<sup>8</sup> Butler's Lives of the Saints, vol. i. p. 283. [Libanius

which he had re-established, promised him victory over the Persians, and bade him prosper. He listened, was persuaded, and perished<sup>o</sup>.

If he had returned from his Persian expedition, he would probably have thrown off the assumed gentleness which made him depend on policy and treachery, rather than on force and violence. The common people destroyed the temples of the pagans wherever they were built. The destroyers who suffered either by the pagans who resisted, or by the magistrates who condemned them, were venerated as martyrs for the faith. Every day increased the separation between the emperor and the Christians. He regarded them as fanatics, and if the writers of the age are correct, he swore their destruction if he returned in safety from Persia. They believed him to be as cruel as he was crafty, and were preparing for more than resistance. They had resolved never to submit again to the dominion of paganism; and they saw that the severity of Amachius, the governor of Phrygia, was only a specimen of the manner in which the whole Christian body must expect to be treated if the emperor returned in safety. In obedience to the order of the sovereign, Amachius purified the heathen temple, and again set up the images which had been thrown down. Many of the Christians could not endure the spectacle. They rushed into the temple and destroyed the images. The governor, resolving to put to death many who were not guilty, the perpetrators of the act came forth from their concealment. The governor commanded them to sacrifice to the idol. On their refusing to do so, they were tortured, and at length broiled to death on

Libanius, the pagan, is quoted by Butler as the authority for this affirmation. This same Libanius, when leaving Antioch, derided a Christian school-master by asking him, "What the carpenter's son was then doing?" The man replied, "The God who made the world, whom you mock, is making a coffin for your master, Julian." The emperor marched with his army on to Edessa, but would not enter the city because it was entirely Christian. He proceeded on to Carræ, in Mesopotamia, which city he entered on April 18, where he performed in secret many

execrable pagan rites, which being finished, he sealed the doors, and set a guard upon them, commanding, that none should open them till his return. It was found, after his death, that his sacrifices consisted of human beings, both at this place and at Antioch; and that previously to his march to meet the Persians from Carræ, he had been performing with his diviners the rites *ab extis inspiciendis* on a sacrificed female.—Theodoret, Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. xxvi. xxvii.

<sup>o</sup> See Amm. Marcell. xxv. 3, who accompanied this expedition into Persia.

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gridirons<sup>1</sup>. Neither was this the only instance of actual persecution. When Julian was on his march against the Persians, two of his officers, Juventin and Maximin, expressed themselves one day at table with much freedom on the subject of the laws against Christians. The emperor sent for both. He endeavoured to prevail on them to retract their words, and to sacrifice to the ancient gods of the empire. On their steady though respectful refusal to do so, he ordered their property to be confiscated, their bodies to be cruelly scourged, and both, some days after, to be beheaded at Antioch<sup>2</sup>. Their friends stole their bodies, and buried them at the hazard of their lives. The Christians saw in these things the fate that was probably awaiting them if Julian returned in safety from Persia. Though he could revenge the offence of the people of Antioch by foolish jokes on his dirty nails and undressed beard, yet he could put Theodorus to the rack<sup>3</sup>; and show a cruelty of spirit which could not be disguised either by pleasantry or philosophy. He had been accustomed to declare, that he would not persecute the Christians, because he would not encourage the spirit of martyrdom, nor the disposition to venerate criminals as martyrs<sup>4</sup>. Towards the end of his short-lived career, this policy began to be altered. He perceived his efforts, like those of the pagan persecutors before him, to be utterly vain against the spirituality and firmness of the Christians. The discovery, instead of making him retrace his steps, only confirmed him in the obstinacy of his hatred; and increased the grossness of his superstition. His rancour was inflamed against the active, fearless, bold, and uncompromising religion he had forsaken; and there can be little doubt that the conclusion to which both his eulogists<sup>5</sup> and opponents have arrived is correct—that these beginnings of actual severity would have terminated in the most relentless and probably the most unsparing persecution, if he had returned in safety from Persia, that had ever yet afflicted the empire. The religion of Christ could not now have been extirpated.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, lib. iii. c. xv.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, lib. iii. c. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. lib. iii. c. xix.

<sup>4</sup> πάντες ὡς ἐπὶ κηρίον μίλιται ἤξουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ μαρτύριον πετόμενοι, is the expression recorded by Chrysostom

as used by Julian. See the homily of Chrysostom on the martyrdom of Juventinus and Maximin; Fronto Ducaeus' edit. vol. vii. p. 484.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, chap. xxiii.; Greg. Nazianzen; and notes to Gibbon.

The vine had taken root, and though wild grapes, as well as the ripe rich clusters fit for the master's use, crowded its branches, it filled the land; and the wild boar of the wood could not have now rooted it up. If the emperor had persisted in his endeavour to destroy Christianity, he must have waded through the bloodshed of a more fierce civil war than any yet known to history. The empire in such a contest would have become a desert, and the barbarians descending on the frontiers, would have made a more easy conquest of the desolate provinces, and the wreck of a divided population. The providence of God decreed that it should not be. The learned, yet pedantic—the cautious, yet imprudent—the brave, but rash—the superstitious, but not religious—the wise, yet foolish emperor, died the death of an honourable and high-minded soldier, in the field of battle, in the heart of Persia.

He had imagined, in the gloomy dreams of his despondency on the night preceding the battle, that he had seen the God of War, to whom he had sworn that he would offer no more sacrifices, appear and frown upon him. The absurd council of the aruspices, whom he consulted in the morning, advised him not to fight on that day. The army was attacked, and he rushed to the scene of danger, and bravely repulsed the enemy before he received his fatal wound. The historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, who was present, does not relate the circumstance which is mentioned by Sozomen<sup>6</sup> and Theodoret; that the emperor finding himself wounded, took of the blood which broke forth from his side, and throwing the warm gore into the air, cried out, "Galilean! thou hast conquered!" It is possible that the conscience of the wounded man, at the moment, might have recalled the inward remembrances of his early life, and that though Ammianus might not have heard the words, others of the soldiers might have done so, and recorded them for the chroniclers of a subsequent age. The thoughts of the dying rest on the subject nearest to the soul<sup>7</sup>; and that subject is more certainly developed by an accidental expression,

<sup>6</sup> Sozomen, lib. vi. chap. ii. Fertur eum, quod cum vulneratus esset, sanguinem e vulnere haustum in aëre projecisse, quasi ad Christum ap-

parentem suspiciens, illum tanquam necis suæ auctorem incusans.

<sup>7</sup> "Dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos."

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in the moment of danger or excitement, than in the deliberate and collected farewell. The great historian of our own country informs us, with reference to these traditions, that the legends of more recent saints may be silently despised<sup>a</sup>. It is possible it may be a legend, but if it be so, it is much less absurd than his assurance, when dying, that he was about to be united with the stars. The immortality of the Gospel is the continuance of the personal identity of the soul in the society of other spirits who were disembodied before the believer himself. The immortality of heathenism was an absorption of the consciousness of identity in the substance of the universe. The first is true philosophy, the second is nonsense. The first is the blessing of the Christian, whether he be prince or peasant; the last was the curse of the dying Julian, of the heathen, of the Deist, and of the fool. In his last moments, says his great eulogist, he displayed, perhaps with some ostentation, the love of virtue and of fame, which had been the ruling passion of his life. He displayed these excellences by summoning to his bedside his attendants and friends, and addressing them in a speech in which he dared to utter the words, "I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my past life."—Much self-eulogy followed, and some metaphysical discussion with two pagan speculatists, or two pagan philosophers. He called for some cold water, and drank, and died.—May God grant to me at that hour to hold other language, and to have other hopes! Let me die the death of the righteous, humble Christian, and not the death of the presumptuous and absurd philosopher. So he died; and believing, as both reason and true philosophy, and well-evidenced revelation compel me to believe, in the Providence which governs the world He created, I cannot but see in the example of Julian a memorable proof of that continued government. The last pagan enemy of Christianity was permitted to rule over the empire of Rome at the time when the sun of Christianity was brightening the horizon of the heathen world, that the truth of that faith might be confirmed to the utmost. By re-establishing the oracles, he so demonstrated their folly, that they have never recovered their influence.

<sup>a</sup> Gibbon, chap. xxv. note 99.

By endeavouring to refute a prophecy, and fairly challenging the truth of Christianity in the matter of the rebuilding of the temple, he was the cause of a series of events, which compel the boldest infidel to pause, before he pronounces the defeat of his attempts to be merely of human origin. By his whole life he showed the weakness of the once all-powerful paganism. By his death he proved how miserable is the consolation which false philosophy can give when it calls annihilation immortality, and destroys at once the accountability, the happiness, and the identity of the soul of man, under the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the silly language of that affected wisdom which is based on no evidence, speaks no certain truth, and affords no real happiness either in life or death; and which, in all these respects, is the contrast to Christianity, and the very antipodes of revelation. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift of a revelation which is proved to be true by every moral demonstration which can be required to satisfy the reason: which gives us gratitude to Christ as our motive, the will of God for our guide, and a better consolation in life and death than the remembrance of our own virtues, or the hope of being absorbed in the soul of the universe.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The same policy of employing the Secular Power in the execution of the Canon Law, adopted by his predecessors, continued by Marcian.—Council of Chalcedon.*

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THE reign of Theodosius II. over the Eastern world, which was prolonged to the unusual term of forty-two years, terminated by his death July 29, A.D. 450. His sister, Pulcheria, at the age of sixteen, had imposed on herself a life of virginity. She has the reputation of having distinguished herself by strict attention to religious duties; and of having urged her brother to avoid every novelty in religion with which the age was perplexed. She also evinced great prudence in admonishing him concerning public affairs, and has the merit of having been the chief means of that humanity towards the unfortunate, and that forgiveness of injuries, which were conspicuous traits in his character; and which were evinced by his having answered, when asked, why he refrained from punishing those who acted maliciously towards him with death?—"Would to God I could restore the dead to life." Upon his death, his sister, Pulcheria, who had taken the title of Augusta, no longer persisted in her determination to enforce on herself a life of celibacy. Having possession of the Eastern empire, she gave herself in marriage to Marcian, who, in consequence, became possessed of the sceptre. He proved himself worthy of the honour which had been conferred upon him, by his zeal in defence of the Nicene doctrines of faith, and by discouraging, throughout the provinces, all the immoral and debasing customs connected with pagan superstition.

Valentinian III. continued to rule the Western empire, to the throne of which he had been promoted in 424, until the year 455. Celestine, Bishop of Rome, died the year following the synod of Ephesus. He was succeeded by Sixtus III., who retained the pontificate until the year 440, when, at his death, it devolved to Leo the Great. Twenty years elapsed between the council of Ephesus and the fourth general council of Chalcedon, the chief events of which period, as far as the Church, during that time, was affected by their various consequences, require to be here briefly noticed.

Great and permanent changes were taking place in many provinces of the Western empire, which evinced its speedy decay. About the year 430, the Vandals had began to pour into Africa; and, in 439, their king, Genseric, marched upon Carthage, which city he entered without opposition. He had received Christianity from the Arians, and proved a severe scourge to the orthodox. He showed the clergy no mercy. Many bishops were martyred, and others bitterly tormented, while the vacant sees were transferred to Arian bishops. The sacred vessels and utensils of the Churches, with all their other wealth, fell to the hands of the freebooters. The Donatists, also, with their allies, the Circumcelliones, still continued their violent enmity and revenge against the orthodox in Eastern Africa. In 443, the Vandal king made a descent on Sicily, which island was desolated by plunder and persecution. Whilst these misfortunes were afflicting the Southern districts, the Franks, under Pharamond, and the Visigoths in Spain, were making inroads on those parts of the empire; and the Anglo-Saxons had, also, obtained a footing in Britain. Dalmatia and Rhætia had, likewise, been penetrated by the Ostrogoths, whose legions in the preceding reign had even assailed the ancient capital of the empire. The effects of these irruptions on the Christian Church were desolation, affliction, and persecution in all parts. Besides the distress to which the British Church was subject at this time from the treachery of the Saxon pagans, the Christians of the district north of the Humber were much harassed and plundered by the Picts and Scots, who still adhered with inveterate zeal to their ancient Celtic superstitions. The Apostolic Churches, however, though ex-

posed to the ferocious violence of so many foreign enemies, in addition to the calamities which they continued to suffer from internal discord and malice, still continued to extend their conquest over the human mind. Through a season of severe trial and contention, from the fastidious and the perverse, the orthodox faith had derived much support from the beneficial zeal, the incessant labours, and the able learning of Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Cyril, Isidore, and other defenders of the Nicene faith. The epistles of Leo, and the integrity of the Emperor Zeno, whose attempt to reconcile the animosities existing among his Christian subjects by his Henoticon, or Letter of Peace, issued in 482, were both useful also in confirming the principles established by the three general councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Ephesus; and by enjoining a revocation of the errors of the Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians. By a comparison of the works of the fathers of this and the preceding ages, we may judge how wide the departure from the simplicity of the Apostolic system became afterwards, till it deviated, at length, into the extravagant decrees of the Council of Trent.

Many provincial councils had been held in consequence of the diversity of opinions to which the Arian, Nestorian, Pelagian, and other prevailing heresies in Europe, Africa, and the Oriental Churches were giving birth; and the Monophysite or Eutychian sect had, since the Council of Ephesus, been the cause of much distraction both throughout the East and West. It had, therefore, been determined to bring the subject before a general council, and the emperor issued the usual orders accordingly, for the bishops to assemble at Chalcedon in the year 451. Previously, however, to an account of the proceedings at this important tribunal, a brief narration of the circumstances connected with the heresy from which the disastrous controversy arose, will be required.

Eutyches, a presbyter and abbot (Archimandrita) over 300 monks at Constantinople, in opposing the Nestorian heresy at the Ephesine synod, asserted and maintained, that although there were two natures in Christ before his incarnation, yet afterwards there was only one, which peculiar doctrine the term *Monophysite* is used to express. This opinion coming

to the ears of Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, he assembled a diocesan synod in 448, by which the doctrine was condemned. The opinions of Eutyches were complained of to the emperor by John of Antioch, who, as it is said, summoned the council<sup>1</sup>; and that Eutyches being three times cited to appear before the fathers, excused himself on the plea of sickness. At the instance of Flavian, time was granted for the restoration of his health, and after a few days the council re-assembled. He then attended, and Florentius Patricius was appointed by the emperor to preside. The acts of the Council of Ephesus were read, and Eutyches was accused of holding opinions contrary to what was there decreed. He was then questioned by Eusebius as to his belief, but did not answer so as to satisfy the council; and when requested by Florentius to answer boldly "whether Jesus Christ, after the incarnation, was of two natures?" he at once said, "That before the union there were two natures, but after the union he acknowledged but one." They urged him to renounce this opinion, but he would not, and they then pronounced him "deprived of his priesthood, of the communion of the Church, and the office of abbot." This sentence was signed by twenty-nine bishops and twenty-four abbots<sup>2</sup>.

Against this decision, Eutyches appealed both to the emperor and to Leo, Bishop of Rome. Leo wrote to Theodosius, praying him not to summon a general council in the East, but in Italy. The emperor, before he received Leo's letter, had appointed a council at the humble request of Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, to be holden at Ephesus, to which Leo was summoned among others. He did not attend himself, but sent three legates as his representatives: Julius, Bishop of Puteoli, Renatus, a priest, and Hilarius, a deacon. He also wrote several letters, one to Flavian, in which he asserts the Divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, and that it is impious to hold, as Eutyches did, that after the incarnation there was only one nature. In the other letters he opposes the opinion of Eutyches, and holds that he was justly condemned by the council under Flavian. In

<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of which are embodied in those of Chalcedon.

sident of this council, and that there were present about fifty-six bishops and abbots.

<sup>2</sup> Cave says, that Flavian was pre-

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that to the emperor he says, that he has sent his legates to be present at Ephesus, and that Eutyches was in error. Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, zealously espoused the opinion of the Egyptian party, of which Eutyches was the leader. He was appointed president of this council by Theodosius, at the suggestion of Chrysaphius, who was godson to Eutyches; and because he had been baptized by him, he was also a special favourite. He was chief eunuch of the bed-chamber, and had a violent dislike and hatred to Flavian.

The council assembled on the 8th of August, 449. It consisted of about 130 bishops; and it decided that Eutyches should be absolved from the crime of heresy, and be restored. Flavian and the other bishops who had been present at his condemnation the year before, attended, but were ordered by the emperor to take no part in the proceedings; and they were condemned and deposed. Flavian was deposed as having acted contrary to the definitions of the councils of Nice and Ephesus, and with him Eusebius, of Dorylæum; Ibas, of Edessa, who was also excommunicated; Daniel, of Carræ; Irenæus, of Tyre; Aquilinus, of Byblus; Theodoret, of Cyprus; and Domnus, of Antioch. When the condemnation of Flavian and Eusebius was made known, the greatest excitement prevailed; some exhorting Dioscorus to reconsider the matter, others loudly protesting against it. Flavian himself denounced the judge, and demanded his acquittal. The bishops were compelled by the soldiers, whom Dioscorus had introduced, to sign the acts of the council; and at his instigation Flavian was condemned to banishment, and so barbarously treated when this sentence was carried into execution, that his death, which took place shortly after, is supposed to have been caused by the violence offered to him. From these circumstances the council obtained the appellation of *an assembly of robbers*, *σύννοδος ληστική*<sup>3</sup>.

In consequence of the legates from Rome protesting against the violence exercised towards Flavian and Eusebius, they were apprehended; but making their escape, they arrived, after encountering many dangers, at Rome, and related to

<sup>3</sup> Gieseler, vol. i. p. 239; Waddington, p. 184; Evagrius, lib. i. c. x.

the bishop the proceedings of the council. Leo wrote to Theodosius, complaining of the conduct of Dioscorus, and praying him to call a general council in Italy. The emperor answered, that he had summoned a council at Ephesus, and that Flavian had been found guilty and condemned, so that it was impossible to do any thing more in the affair. Leo, in urging upon the emperor the necessity of calling together a general council, adds, "that to do so is unavoidable, after an appeal put in (which Flavian did), and also that it was conformable to the laws established in the Council of Nice." The laws, however, to which the pope alludes, are the canons of the Council of Sardica, and they are quoted to show, that in the case of an appeal, a synod ought to be called to examine the case already judged, and not to show that he had a right himself to review it. This letter is dated October 13. The Church unanimously rejects this synod as not legitimate<sup>4</sup>.

Theodosius died in the year 450, and Marcian, who succeeded him in the government of the Eastern empire, was of a different opinion to that which had been expressed by the late emperor; whose sister, Pulcheria, as before stated, he had married, and guided by whose desire he summoned a general council to be held at Chalcedon. This was contrary to the wish of the Bishop of Rome, who solicited that it should assemble in Italy. The Roman legates, when they found that the emperor's determination was against its being held in Italy, requested that it might assemble in Nice; but in this proposition the emperor declined also to acquiesce. The objects of the Council of Chalcedon were, to decide whether Eutyches was guilty of heresy or not; and, also, to take into consideration the acts of the late synod, which had been surreptitiously convened at Ephesus, at which, by the stratagem of Dioscorus, the opinions of Eutyches still obtained sanction, contrary to the expostulations of the orthodox; and, consequently, the decision of a general council on the subject was rendered imperative<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Du Pin, vol. ii. p. 228; Geddes, Diss. de Sardicensibus Canon. ap. Du Pin, vol. iv. p. 228. Miscell. Tract. ii. 415.

<sup>5</sup> Evagrius, lib. i. c. x.; lib. ii. c. 5.

According to the plan before adopted, I supply a synopsis of the fourth general council.

COUNCIL IV.—CHALCEDON.	
Date.	A.D. 451. Session about twenty days, from October the 8th <sup>6</sup> .
Number of Bishops.	About six hundred and thirty <sup>7</sup> .
By whom summoned.	Emperor Marcian <sup>8</sup> .
President.	The emperor's commissioners opened the council, and from the sixth day the emperor personally presided.
Why and against what opinions called.	The Monophysite doctrine, that there is only one nature in Christ, the Divine and human being absorbed in one another.
Against whom.	Eutyches, an abbot and presbyter, and Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria.
Chief decrees and canons.	Sixteen acts, which occupied as many days. Thirty canons drawn up in the last act.
Penalties.	Deposition, condemnation.
Sufferers.	Eutyches, Dioscorus, Juvenal, Thalassius, Eusebius, Eustathius, Basilus <sup>9</sup> .
Emperors.	Marcian of the East, Valentinian III. of the West.
Bishop of Rome.	Leo Magnus, not present, but represented by Paschasius and Lucentius (bishops), and Boniface (presbyter).

The sessions or acts of this synod are generally stated to have been sixteen in number, but Du Pin reckons only

<sup>6</sup> Du Pin, vol. iv. p. 230 ; Cave, vol. i. p. 482 ; Venema, vol. iv. p. 476.

<sup>7</sup> See the authorities last cited. Also Platina, Vit. Leo. I. ; Howell's Synodicon, p. 25 ; Beveridge, vol. i. p. 111. Dupin and Cave think, that the number of bishops present was not more than 600, though all the other au-

thorities say 630 ; and Du Pin states that more attended this council than any other.

<sup>8</sup> See the authorities quoted above.

<sup>9</sup> To the authors already cited, add Evagrius, lib. v. c. ii. ; and Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 78.

fifteen<sup>1</sup>, which he explains by saying, that the thirty canons passed at the last sitting are only an explanation of the three which were enacted in the third session.

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*Acts of the Council.*

I. The legates from Rome oppose Dioscorus sitting as a member of the council, alleging, that he ought to give an account of his conduct in the former synod held at Ephesus. To this the council agreed, and he was accused by Eusebius, Bishop of Dorylæum, who said, with tears, that he had been unjustly condemned by Dioscorus; that the death of Flavian had been caused by the conduct of Dioscorus towards him; and that the faith had been injured by the proceedings of that bishop. It was then determined that the acts of the Ephesine and Constantinopolitan councils, the latter of which had been held under Flavian, should be read. This having been done, it was found that Dioscorus, president of the Ephesine council, had not allowed the letter of Leo, Bishop of Rome, to be read, although he was twice requested to do so—that he, moreover, made the bishops there assembled sign a blank paper, having caused them to be surrounded by armed soldiers until they did so.—The fathers then decided from the acts and the testimony of those who were present, that Flavian and Eusebius were unjustly condemned, and that those who had presided in the Council of Ephesus, namely, Dioscorus, of Alexandria; Juvenal, of Jerusalem; Thalassius, of Cæsarea; Eusebius, of Ancyra; Eustathius, of Berytus; and Basil, of Seleucia, in Isauria, should suffer the same punishment as they had inflicted on Flavian and Eusebius of Dorylæum. This sentence was approved, but deposition was not pronounced until the articles of his faith should be compared with those of the Church.

II. The Nicene and Constantinopolitan creeds were read, together with two letters of Cyril, and that of Leo to Flavian, “Of the Incarnation,” in which he condemns the errors of Eutyches, and sets forth the orthodox faith concerning each nature of Christ. Many passages from the fathers were brought forward in support of the doctrine, and the council unanimously assented to it. The Oriental bishops were

<sup>1</sup> Van Espen, vol. iii. p. 217. Beveridge and Howell.

very vehement against Dioscorus, calling out loudly for his banishment; whilst the Illyrians and Egyptians contended that he ought to be treated with some little favour.

III. Held on the 13th of October, when Eusebius of Dorylæum complained of the injuries which Flavian and himself had suffered from Dioscorus; and also accused him of holding the same opinions as Eutyches. It was determined that he should be summoned before the council, according to ecclesiastical custom. After the second citation, Athanasius, a priest (nephew of Cyril), Theodorus and Iscario (deacons), and Sophronius, a laic, from Alexandria, brought other charges against Dioscorus. He was summoned the third time, and reminded, that according to the ecclesiastical canons he was bound to appear when called by a general synod; but he did not, and sentence was passed by all the bishops except those who had been concerned with him in the Ephesine synod. The accusations alleged are the same as those of the first action, and Anatolius of Constantinople said, that he was deposed, not on account of his faith, but because he had excommunicated Leo, Bishop of Rome; and also, that having been thrice called to the council, he did not appear. The commissioners were not present at this action. The council sent to the emperor an account of the proceedings, and also to the Empress Pulcheria. They certified Dioscorus of the judgment against him, and published it by a private writing to the clergy of Alexandria, and by a public edict to all the people of Chalcedon and Constantinople.

IV. This act seems to consist of three parts; the first held on the 17th of October, when the five bishops deposed by the first act were restored to their dignity and places. The petition of the Egyptian bishops was read, and they not allowed to sign Leo's letters, owing to their want of a patriarch, and fear of injury from their countrymen. Two others from the monks of Egypt of different import were read, one favourable to Dioscorus, the other not. The monks who signed the former confessed the faith of Nice and Ephesus, but would neither sign Leo's letter nor anathematize Eutyches. They were allowed a few days for consideration. The second part of this act took place on the 20th of October, when a further time of thirty days was granted to Carosus,

Dorotheus, Barsumas, and the other monks, to decide whether they would submit themselves to the council or not, and if not, the act declared them deprived of their places and excommunicated them. The third part was to settle a dispute between Photius, Bishop of Tyre, and Eustathius, Bishop of Berytus, regarding the boundaries of their respective bishoprics, when the fourth canon of the Nicene council was ordered to be the rule of guidance. The commissioners were present at this action.

V. The commissioners caused to be read the confession of faith as drawn up in the second session, to which the greater part of the bishops consented; but the legates from Rome insisted that Leo's epistle should also be inserted, which was opposed. The emperor ordered that bishops should be chosen out of the East, Pontus, Asia, Thrace, and Illyria, who should assemble in the Church of St. Euphemia, and draw up a confession of faith. This they did, and brought it to the council. It contained an approbation of the creed of Nice and Constantinople, of St. Cyril's synodical letters to Nestorius and the Eastern bishops, and Leo's letter. The confession concludes with a declaration, that the persons are deposed and accursed who shall dare to compose or propose any other creed than that of this council. This was on the 22nd of October.

VI. October the 25th. The emperor came to the council, and said, he had called it together for the purpose of preserving the faith in its purity, and to establish peace. He ordered the confession which had been drawn up in the preceding session to be read, to which he subscribed, and many bishops who had been absent did the same. He submitted three regulations concerning the building and ordering of monasteries, monks, and the proper offices of the clergy, which the council sanctioned. The city of Chalcedon was erected into a metropolis.

VII. The contest between Maximus, Bishop of Antioch, and Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, was settled. It related to the boundaries of their respective sees. This was on the 26th of October. Juvenal, also, who, by an act of a former council, had been allowed the honorary degree of patriarch, obtained for the province of Jerusalem, which comprehended Palestine, an equality of rank with the four

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other patriarchates, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch.

VIII. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus, who had held the dogmas of Nestorius, and joined John of Antioch in his opposition to Cyril, being wishful to declare his faith before the council, was called upon explicitly to anathematize Nestorius and his opinions, which having done, he was received as catholic, and took his seat among the bishops.

IX. X. Ibas, of Edessa, who had been condemned by Dioscorus, complained to the council, asserting his innocence, and referred them to Photius of Tyre, and Eustathius of Berytus, who had inquired into the case by the command of the emperor. They pronounced him of orthodox sentiments, and acquitted him of various crimes alleged against him.

XI. XII. The dispute between Bassian and Stephen, concerning the see of Ephesus, was decided, the council declaring, that according to the canons, neither should be bishop; Bassian, because he had obtained possession by force, and without observing the rules prescribed by the canons; and Stephen, because he had been ordained by unlawful means. They, however, allowed them annually two hundred nobles a piece from the revenues of the Church at Ephesus.

XIII. The dispute between Eunomius of Nicomedia and Anastasius of Nicæa was enquired into. It was to ascertain what cities were under their respective jurisdiction.

XIV. Sabinian, Bishop of Paros, complained that he had been kept out of his see by Athanasius, who was deprived. The council determined, that Sabinian should be bishop, and not Athanasius, who had been restored by Dioscorus.

XV. XVI. Thirty canons relating to ecclesiastical discipline were enacted.

I. This canon commands, that the canons made by preceding councils be observed.

II. By this it is enjoined, that if any bishop ordain for money, or sell the gifts of the Spirit, which are invaluable, whether it be a bishop that is ordained for filthy lucre, or a priest, or a suffragan bishop, or a deacon, or any other clergyman, or a steward, or an advocate, he who is proved

to have done so, shall be deposed, as well as the person ordained; and if any person be a procurer of ordination for gain, he shall be deposed if he be a clergyman, and excommunicated if he be a monk or layman.

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III. Forbids bishops, clergymen, or monks, to hire farms, or to engage themselves in worldly affairs, unless the law oblige them to be guardians, or the bishops charge them with the administration of the Church, or to take care of the widows and orphans; and such persons as stand in need of the relief of the Church.

IV. This is concerning monks, and is intended, especially, to bring them under the jurisdiction of the bishop in whose diocese their monastery is situated.

V. Revives the ancient canons against such clergymen as remove from one city to another.

VI. Forbids the ordination of any clergyman absolutely and without a Church title, that is to say, who is not set apart for the service of some particular Church, either in the city or country, or of some chapel or monastery; and declares those ordinations void that are celebrated otherwise, and forbids them that are so ordained to do the functions of their ministry, that they may conceal from disgrace those who have ordained them.

VII. Forbids those that have been ordained, or are made monks, to leave their stations; and declares them excommunicate if they do so.

VIII. Enjoins the clergy that belong to monasteries, and chapels of martyrs, to be subject to their respective bishops.

IX. Forbids those clergymen to apply themselves to any other judicature than the bishops, or those who are appointed judges by them; and commands, that if any clergyman have any complaint against his bishop, he should address himself to a provincial synod; or if he have any accusation against his metropolitan, he shall go to the exarch of the diocese.

X. Shows, that it is forbidden for a clergyman to be instituted to two churches at one time, to that, namely, in which he was ordained, and to that to which he is removed; and that those who do so, shall be obliged to return to their church, or if they remain in the church to which they are removed, they shall have nothing of the revenue of

the church which they have left, nor of the hospitals of that church.

XI. Makes a distinction between letters of recommendation which are given to persons suspected and unknown, and letters of communion which are given to persons well known. It declares, that the latter ought to be given to the poor.

XII. Forbids bishops to divide their provinces; and by obtaining letters patent from the emperor, to raise their city to the title of a metropolis; and declares, that the bishops of those cities who have been raised to their dignity by their prince's letters, should have the honour and title only of a metropolitan; but none of the rights of a real metropolitan.

XIII. That strange and unknown clergymen be not received without commendatory letters from their bishops.

XIV. Forbids readers and singers to marry heretical wives; and obliges those who have married such, to bring their children to the Church to be baptized, and to bring them up in the faith of the Church.

XV. Forbids the ordination of a deaconess before forty years of age, and without strict examination; and declares, that if she shall marry after she hath been some time in the service of the Church, she shall be excommunicated with her husband.

XVI. That it is not permitted for virgins, which are devoted to God, to marry; that they who have done so, shall be excommunicated; that, nevertheless, the bishop of the place may treat them with such lenity and mildness as he thinks fit.

XVII. That the Churches or dioceses should remain under the jurisdiction of the bishops who are in possession of them, especially if they have been so for thirty years past; but if within thirty years past there has been any dispute about them, it shall be permitted to refer them to the provincial synod; or, if it be a bishop who is injured by his metropolitan, he may have recourse to the bishop (patriarch) of his diocese, or the bishop of Constantinople. Lastly, if the emperor changes the condition of a city by his authority, the ecclesiastical order of the diocese shall follow the civil constitution,

XVIII. Forbids clergymen and monks to enter into conspiracies, cabals, or other factions against their bishop.

XIX. Revives the decree of the Council of Nice, for the holding of provincial councils twice a year.

XX. Forbids bishops from receiving clergymen from other bishops.

XXI. Commands, that it be examined what manner of persons they are who accuse bishops, or other churchmen, before their accusation be received.

XXII. Shows, that it is not lawful for the clergy to seize upon the estate of their bishop after he is dead.

XXIII. Orders the advocates of the Church of Constantinople to bid that the strange monks who have come into the city without leave from their bishop, depart thence forthwith.

XXIV. That the places where any monastery hath been built should always be set apart for that use.

XXV. Enjoins metropolitans to celebrate ordinations three months after the death of a bishop; and in the mean time that the revenues of the Church be taken care of by the stewards.

XXVI. Enjoins every bishop to have a steward to protect the revenues of his Church.

XXVII. Deposés or excommunicates those who take away women by force, under a pretence of marrying them, and those who pretend to defend them.

XXVIII. This canon grants to the Church of the city of Constantinople, which is called New Rome, the same privileges with Old Rome; because this city is the second city in the world. It also adjudges to it, besides this, the jurisdiction over the dioceses of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace, and over the Churches which are out of the bounds of the emperor, and a right to ordain metropolitans in the provinces of these dioceses.

XXIX. That it is sacrilege to reduce a bishop to the grade of a priest, because, when a bishop deserves to be deprived of his bishopric, he is not worthy to be a priest, at least, if he be not unjustly deposed.

XXX. Repeats what had been ordered upon the account of the Egyptian bishops who would not sign the condemnation of Nestorius, as mentioned in Art. IV.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Policy and Laws of Justinian in matters of Religion.—The Canon Law.—Brief Review of the Progress of the Papal Power till it obtained ascendancy over the Churches.—Edict of Justinian conferring authority on John II., Bishop of Rome, and transfer of the sceptre from the Civil to the Ecclesiastical Power of Rome.—Second Council of Constantinople.*

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THE fifth general council was held at Constantinople in the year 553, being 102 years after the Council of Chalcedon, comprehended in which period are the more important transactions in the age of Justinian; "the most disastrous," as Gibbon alleges, "in the annals of the human race." Valentinian III. died in 455, and twenty years afterwards the Western empire expired also. In this short space of time no less than nine successive sovereigns occupied the throne of the Cæsars, namely, Maximus, Avitus, Majorianus, Licinius, Anthemius, Olybrius, Glycerius, Julius Nepos, and Romulus Augustulus. The last named of these had scarcely time to array himself in the purple before he was stripped of his robe by Odoacer, a leader of the Heruli, who proclaimed himself king of Italy. After a reign of eighteen years, Odoacer was murdered by Theodoric, who established the Ostrogothic dynasty, and reigned thirty-three years. Although so uneducated as not to understand the use of letters, he evinced considerable judgment in the discreet use of his power over subjects the most renowned for liberal learning and refinement; and though himself a disciple of Arianism, the orthodox Church received no molestation from the Northern conqueror, but rather met with protection. Seven

other Ostrogothic sovereigns, his successors, sustained the kingdom for the term of fourscore years, when, in the year 554, it was overthrown by Belisarius, the famed commander of Justinian's army, whose skill and bravery recovered Africa also from the hands of the Vandals. After the expulsion of the Goths, the Eastern emperors appointed viceroys over Italy under the title of Exarchs, whose seat of government was Ravenna.

The emperor of the East, during the parallel period, after the death of Marcian, in 457, passed successively into the hands of Leo I. and II., Basiliscus, Zeno Isauricus, Anastasius, Justin, and Justinian.

The Vandals continued to persecute the orthodox in Africa without remorse, as long as their dominion lasted, during which time Fulgentius, and seventy other bishops, were driven into exile. Under the Visigoths, Sueci, and other invaders of Spain, the Church continued to endure relentless affliction. Alaric having seated himself in Toulouse as his royal residence, though himself an Arian, permitted the bishops of that part of France not only to remain unmolested in their sees, but to hold a synod at Adge, where Cæsarius, Bishop of Arles, was president, and at which several judicious canons for the discipline of the Churches were passed. In other parts of Gaul, as well as in Germany and Italy, the Franks and Ostrogoths were a great scourge to the professors of the true faith, both Symmachus and Boethius having suffered death at the bidding of Theodoric. A king of the Visigoths, also, named Leovigild, an Arian, put his own son to death because he embraced the belief in the Trinity; and a vow was made by Alboinus, a Longobard king, that he would exterminate all Christians. Chosroes, the sovereign of Persia, after an unsparing massacre of the followers of the Gospel in his dominions, was at length himself converted. Euphemius and Macedonius, bishops of Constantinople, were arbitrarily expelled from their province by the Emperor Anastasius, who showed violent hostility to the Church, and to the enactments of the synod of Chalcedon; by using his utmost influence to destroy the Nicene doctrines in all parts of the East by distressing persecutions of the orthodox. Most of these calamitous affairs, it will be observed, were the result of dissensions in the Church itself, carried on

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remorselessly by Christians against Christians; and, for the most part, they may be traced to the grievous infection of Arianism, which the kings of the Ostrogoths and Visigoths in Italy and Spain, and the Vandal sovereigns in Africa, had contributed to spread among the bishops and clergy, as well as the laity, both of the East and West<sup>1</sup>; though the Monophysites in Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, were not behind others in revenging the rejection of their favourite notions as to the hypostatic union in the person of the Saviour. Perhaps, indeed, the most malignant and baneful feud that ever happened in the Church, and one the effects of which were more evil and more lasting than any other, may be referred to the disaffected and vindictive Eutychians of this age. As an impressive warning of the awful consequences of disunion and contention among Christians, the narrative of a few of the calamities of which the imaginary conceits of a monk were the sole origin, cannot be offered to reflecting and conscientious Christians of the present age without producing salutary effects—without deterring the religiously disposed mind from venturing out of the plain way of truth, for the sake of theorizing on intricate and inscrutable subtleties; which can only end in disappointment, vanity, derangement, and disorganization of Christian fellowship, by the total confusion of the one faith in one Redeemer.

The Monophysite error was speedily the parent of three sectarian progenies, the *Acephali*, the *Theopaschites*, and the *Armenians*<sup>2</sup>. The first named of these owed its establishment to persons who united themselves to a faction created by a deacon named Peter Moggus or Mongus (stammerer), who, in connexion with Timothy Ælurus, a Monophysite bishop of Alexandria, excited the populace of Alexandria riotously to resent the deposition of Dioscorus, before mentioned as having presided at the pseudo-Ephesine synod, which defended Eutychian principles, and as one of those condemned by the Council of Chalcedon. Proterius had been elected to succeed Dioscorus in the patriarchate of Alexandria, who, after having continued to discharge the

<sup>1</sup> See Spanheim, p. 363.

and its results, in Giesler, i. 315,

<sup>2</sup> See a good summary of this heresy seqq.

duties of his office for five years, amidst incessant agitation and hostility, was at last murdered in his Church by Ælurus, Moggus, and their turbulent partizans, by whom numbers of the orthodox were put to death. Timothy Ælurus having been appointed by the Eutychian insurrectionists to the patriarchal see of Alexandria, was removed by the edict of the Emperor Leo; and an orthodox prelate, named also Timothy, was raised to the vacant seat, who endeavoured by conciliatory measures to restore tranquillity to the city. But the outrages consequent upon these dissensions were not confined to Alexandria. By exciting the disaffected in Constantinople, the tyrant Basiliscus succeeded in dethroning the Emperor Zeno, and re-instating Ælurus in the bishopric of Alexandria. In resistance to these rebellious proceedings, Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, had recourse to a counter-insurrection, by which desperate measure Zeno was restored to the throne; and Timothy Ælurus, in apprehension of the punishment which awaited him, committed suicide.

The *Theopaschites*, sprung also from the Eutychian fanaticism at the same time as the Acephali, made Antioch no less a scene of disorder than that which prevailed at Alexandria. The person most distinguished in the conspiracy by which the tumults at Antioch were excited was a monk of Constantinople, named Peter, who had formerly been a fuller; and was familiarly called Peter Gnapheus, or Peter the Fuller. He was a violent adversary of the measures which had resulted from the Council of Chalcedon, a friend of Eutyches, and a most intemperate supporter of his opinions. To the doxology at that time used in the service of the Church, in which the *τρισάγιον*, or thrice-holy, occurs, he introduced the words *Θεὸς ἐσταυρώθη*, *God was crucified*, in order to support the assertion of Eutyches, that the Deity actually suffered crucifixion. The monastic orders at this time were very powerful as a body. Having instigated them to support his cause in the city, he deposed the patriarch of Antioch; and by craft and daring efforts was himself appointed in his stead. After this success, he sought, by means of a circular, to summon the bishops of the patriarchate to annul the decrees of Chalcedon, and to place that synod under condemnation; but was prevented from carrying

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his design into effect by an imperial edict of the Emperor Leo, which caused his deposition. He was again restored to the dignity by the usurper, Basiliscus, and on the restoration of Zeno, again deprived; but he ultimately obtained possession of the see by a treacherous acknowledgment of the decisions of the councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Ephesus.

The other sect before mentioned, as an emanation from the Eutychian doctrine, was introduced by a person named Ethanius, an Armenian, whose tenets were consonant to those of Peter the Fuller with respect to *the Trisagion* and the additional words, "who was crucified for us." They also rejected the enactments of the Council of Chalcedon, and differed otherwise from orthodoxy in their celebration of the rites of Baptism and the Eucharist.

In this state of anarchy, into which all the Eastern Churches had been thrown by the furious resentments of the Monophysite enthusiasts, the Emperor Leo appealed to the bishops to have the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon revised; and a convocation was held in deference to the desire of the emperor, by which the transactions of that synod were confirmed by the Churches of the East and West. Upon the death of Timothy Ælurus, the commotions at Alexandria were revived by a struggle for the patriarchate, between Peter Mongus, before mentioned, and John Talaja; and the great strength which the Monophysite conspiracy was gaining in Egypt and Syria by the accession of the Scythian monks, a body of whom had obtained possession of Jerusalem, in which city they committed the most flagrant and excessive acts of outrage; induced the Emperor Zeno to endeavour to put an end to the religious factions and feuds, and scandalous perversions of Scriptural instruction; by a memorable edict, called the Henoticon<sup>3</sup>, or Letter of Peace. In this document the errors of the Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the Pelagians, and other anti-Nicene creeds were alike discountenanced, and the decrees of former councils confirmed; but the Chalcedon synod, which had condemned the doctrines and leaders of the Monophysite heresy, and thereby kindled the flame of insurrection then raging throughout the Eastern provinces, was omitted to be named. This imperial effort to assuage the intemperate animosities

<sup>3</sup> See it entire in *Evang.* H. E. iii. 14. *Niceph.* H. E. xvi. 12.

existing between the orthodox and their opponents had been made at the solicitation of Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, by whom and Simplicius, patriarch of Rome, it was subscribed. The contest between John Talaja and Peter Moggus for the patriarchal chair of Alexandria having ended in the partizans of the latter putting him in possession by violence, and Peter Gnapheus, or the Fuller, having accomplished his project with regard to the see of Antioch by similar means, in order to secure their dignities, they each signed the Henoticon, and thus gave a feigned acquiescence to the principles established by the œcumenical councils, and, consequently, made a virtual renunciation of their heresy. Acacius, however, refused to acknowledge them unless they each subscribed, also, the orthodox Confession of Faith. Upon this the hostility between the patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria was renewed with increased virulence; and the Bishop of Rome, who entertained a jealous enmity towards Acacius, made himself a party in the strife, by sending complaints to the emperor, impeaching the conduct of his episcopal brother, on account of Moggus having defeated Talaja in their contest for the see. After the death of Simplicius, A.D. 483, his successor, Felix II., continued the strife with unabated jealousy. He summoned Acacius before him for having held intercourse with Moggus, a Eutychian, and took upon himself to excommunicate him for the offence. This usurpation of authority produced retaliation on the part of Acacius, who excommunicated Felix, and blotted out his name from the records of the Church. Felix dying in 492, was succeeded by Gelasius, who prolonged the animosity with the same venomous spirit; and thus, for a series of years, were the dignitaries of the five great patriarchates, and their dependent provinces, kept in a state of constant tumult and discord, all arising from a mistaken zeal, too often prejudicial to true religion. Nestorius had been guilty of substituting a term in the Nicene symbolum on his own authority, conceiving it to be preferable to the expression adopted by the fathers in council; and Eutyches, in defence, as he meant, of the orthodox faith, attempting a refutation of the error of Nestorius, committed, himself, a mistake as much at variance with the established doctrine as the error against which he was contending. When called

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to account, after several years had elapsed, he persisted in the opinion advanced before; and, upon his condemnation, the monasteries of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and throughout the East, to which great numbers of Scythian converts in this age had flocked, poured forth their masses at the instigation of turbulent and selfish spirits, under pretence of vindicating the Monophysite doctrine. This insurrection overthrew the order and fraternal communion of the Church for a considerable length of time. One of the evils which may be traced to these troubles and contentions, was the destruction of the communion which had ever before subsisted between the Eastern and Western Churches, which, though occasionally restored afterwards, never recovered its former cordiality. The reader must be left to imagine, from the very cursory account which has been given, the wide extent to which the grievances and mischiefs of these feuds, in the highest orders of the Church, spread their discordant consequences. New heresies still continued to spring up from the Monophysite roots, of which the Severites, the Jacobites, the Aphthartodocetæ, the Phthartolatræ, the Agnoetæ, and the Monothelites, are a few of the species; the names of which sects, without any of their distinguishing tenets, are all that it is necessary to mention. The remains of them are still to be found in various parts of Asia; and in Egypt the present Copts are said to be the remnant of the Monophysite patriarchs; but the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch declined in importance from the time they fell under the government of Gnapheus and Moggus<sup>4</sup>.

The incalculable and irreparable evils which the Church of Christ was destined to suffer in its future stages in consequence of its dismemberment, at this time, (the ties of union between its previously existing guardians having been thus dissolved by a few restless spirits prone to novelty,) may be better conceived than described; but, in contemplating the train of evils now speeding in succession, of which those just viewed are a mere section, the fact ought never to be out of sight, that making heresy a crime punishable by the civil power, was the first evil expedient from which the subsequent disasters have continued to increase and multiply.

<sup>4</sup> See Giesler, i. 315; Spanheim, p. 235—373.

Though Odoacer and Theodoric may be regarded as absolute monarchs of Italy, whose power being derived from conquest, was sustained by armed legions, yet the influence which the Church of Rome had acquired rendered it a matter of policy for these Arian princes to continue on amicable terms with the Roman hierarchy. Upon the fall, therefore, of the Western Empire, the Bishop of Rome was left at liberty in conducting the affairs of religion; and after the schism between the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople, Theodoric felt secure from any league between the ecclesiastical powers of the East and West which might endanger his throne. He, therefore, refrained from interfering in the contest between Symmachus and Laurentius for the Roman patriarchate, holding himself perfectly neutral until entreated by both parties to interpose; upon which he referred the settlement of the dispute to a synod of the provincial clergy. Laurentius had been preferred to the dignity by the imperial party, on condition of subscribing the Henoticon; and the synod, convoked by Symmachus, determined that the interference of the laity in matters concerning the Church was a violation of the laws and customs universally recognized. This decision was confirmed by Theodoric, and Symmachus was consequently raised to the patriarchal throne of Rome<sup>5</sup>.

These concessions of the Ostrogothic kings to the ecclesiastical authorities rendered the patriarchal power of Rome more disposed to resist any increase of influence which the Eastern Church might attempt; and since the period of the Monophysite innovations, the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch had sunk so much into disfavour with the orthodox, as to be disregarded, in a great measure, by the Roman see. The extensive jurisdiction conferred on the patriarch of Constantinople by the Council of Chalcedon, elevated him to

<sup>5</sup> Giesler, vol. i. p. 336.

Gibbon says, Theodoric "introduced toleration," but the decree of Constantine had previously done so in theory. The toleration, however, which had been granted by the edict of the emperor was not allowed by the Catholic Church of that day; and, as Theodoric could not read, and, therefore, could not be supposed to know any thing

concerning the points in dispute among the ecclesiastical parties, by permitting them to settle their dissensions among themselves, and, as far as he was concerned, giving liberty to all sects to follow their own opinions, he, in effect, brought that toleration into practice which had previously existed in theory. —See Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 31—44.

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something like equality with the more ancient head of the Roman Church; but the distraction caused in the Eastern districts by sectarian hostility, arising from a continued increase of new hypotheses in religion, and from the frequent interference of the emperors in the affairs of the Church, had a tendency to weaken the former, and, at the same time, to increase the ambition and ecclesiastical predominance of the latter. The advantages of the Roman hierarchy were, moreover, strengthened by the fact, that the emperor, Justin, was compelled, by a commotion of the people, to solicit a renewal of the communion with the Church of Rome, which had been broken off in the disputes between Acacius and Felix II.; and which was consented to on condition of the emperor giving his full sanction to the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. The patriarch of Antioch, the Bishop of Halicarnassus, and other Monophysite bishops, were also displaced by the emperor, at the desire of the Bishop of Rome; and they sought an asylum in Alexandria, the possession of which see augmented the influence of the party. At this time the episcopal power was gaining influence from the desire of the emperors to employ it in aid of their own authority; and the two rival patriarchates were manifestly striving to outvie each other in deriving advantage from this evident design on the part of the civil rulers. The seat of empire being so far distant from Rome, gave that Church the opportunity of pursuing its pretensions almost without controul, supported as it was by the kings of Germany, France, and Spain, as well as Italy; and the title of ‘œcumenical,’ or universal bishop, having been conferred on the patriarchs of Constantinople, was stigmatized by the Roman pontiffs as blasphemous and profane. To the great offence given by this titular equality, may be ascribed many of the acts of presumption and arrogance to which the bishops of Rome proceeded. The excommunication of the Emperor Anastasius by Symmachus, who asserted that his was higher than the imperial dignity; the anathema of his immediate successor Hormisdas, against the Emperor Acacius; the assumption by Pope John the First of the title of “Supreme of all the priests of God<sup>6</sup>,” are instances that exemplify the fact, that as the imperial power languished, so

<sup>6</sup> See Spanheim, p. 358, 359.

the ecclesiastical grew formidable; and that at the time Justinian received the reins of empire, a concentration of authority by a concurrence of inevitable circumstances had become settled in the hierarchy of Rome; and that the way had been thus gradually and imperceptibly paved for the advancement of that stupendous tyranny which, for a thousand years afterwards, awed and scourged the Christian world.

Subject as it was to the hatred of the Jews, and the remnants of pagans who had retired into solitudes and remote regions, where they might still offer incense to deities having eyes which see not, and ears without hearing—injured as it was by continually increasing divisions arising from the frailties, the ambition, and treacheries of the carnal-minded, it might naturally be imagined that Christianity would lose ground and sink into oblivion. But it was far otherwise. Notwithstanding the variety and multitudes of new and old prejudices, and the many internal and external violations by which the orthodox Church was profaned, its immortal truths continued to expand and to fertilize the barren colonies of the earth. Several entire nations, with their kings, were added to the family of the faithful, while rankling dissensions were afflicting the peace of the great Christian cities. Among these, that of Clovis, king of the Franks, which caused the close union that afterwards subsisted between Burgundy and Rome, is one of especial importance. The nations of Colchis, Armenia, Georgia, Iberia, and Mesopotamia, at this time were, with their rulers, fully converted. The Ethiopian and Saracen kings, with their subjects, embraced the Gospel. Most of the nations and tribes of Germany became, also, members of Christ during this age; and the Anglo-Saxons, together with the Picts and Scots, who had been such malicious foes to the early British Christians, were, by the labours of St. Augustine and the missionaries who accompanied and followed him, persuaded to forego the ignorant worship of their illiterate ancestors; and to accept the means of grace and remission of sins, which were only to be obtained through the merits of the Redeemer. The expulsion of Arianism from Spain, and the conversion of many of these, and of other sects of heretics, are recorded as having taken place

at this time; thus the gates of hell were unable to prevail against the universal Church which God had planted.

From the foregoing brief view of the state of the Church during the reigns of the several emperors from Leo I. to Justin, it will be seen, that the ecclesiastical and imperial authority, till now exercised distinctly, in spiritual affairs, were drawing towards a point where the influences of the two were to become united in the hierarchy of Rome. The reign of Justin I. terminated 1 Aug. A.D. 527, when he was succeeded by his nephew Justinian, who had then attained the age of forty-five, and who occupied the throne nearly thirty-nine years. The whole of his reign may be said to have been spent in encouraging designs for the advancement of religion. He built many magnificent churches, improved the regulations concerning dioceses, revived in many instances the languid bishoprics, and was assiduous in giving efficiency to the offices of the clergy. He made it his duty to study, and sanction, with imperial authority, whatever he thought tended to promote the welfare of the Church. His rigid desire to be orthodox led him to aim at the extermination of Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, the Manichean, and all other heresies, by expulsion from their churches, and the transferring of the churches to the orthodox; nor did he hesitate to confiscate private as well as public property in his attempts to root out what was deemed contrary to the Catholic faith. Thus, in the ineffectual experiment of inflicting punishment in order to prevent and subdue errors in religion, he proved himself a disciple of that injudicious policy which had been adopted by Constantine, and continued, with an increase of calamity, by his several successors. In his zeal to establish and disseminate orthodox principles, by which he may be allowed the merit of having meant to strengthen the religion which he professed, he failed to profit by the warnings furnished by the train of miseries which resulted from the system of preventing speculations in theology, and stopping the progress of heresy by the terrors of torture and death. No transaction of his memorable reign has caused the name of Justinian to be more often mentioned than the celebrated collection of civil and ecclesiastical laws which he caused to be made. This great undertaking was commenced immediately upon his

accession, and was not finally completed until the year of his death. It consists of four distinct parts, called the Codex, BOOK II.  
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The first part contains the chief laws in the Theodosian code, with those from earlier collections made by Gregorianus, and continued by Hermogenes<sup>7</sup>, together with the constitutions of the emperors after the time of Theodosius. It was compiled under the superintendence of an eminent civilian, named Tribonianus, who, with the assistance of nine other distinguished jurists, completed it in the second year of the reign of the emperor. It is intituled *Codex Justinianeus Primæ Prælectionis*.

As soon as this was finished, Tribonianus, with sixteen magistrates and lawyers to assist him, proceeded with the *Pandects*, which is a complete body of law, arranged from the works of all preceding authorities, consisting of fifty books, the subjects of which had been scattered in a variety of forms. The most generally useful and common business portion of these volumes was then extracted and condensed into a compendium, which was promulgated in four books, called *The Institutes*. The digests and institutes were designed as a standard guide for the courts and academies, and to be the system by which all law causes of the empire should be determined. It was completed in the year 528.

The next year a revision of the code of 528 was published, which it superseded under the title of *Codex Repetitæ Prælectionis*.

The imperial edicts were then collected into one volume, which received the name of *Novellæ*. This last part of the collection having been originally written in Greek, Justinian, in the last year of his reign, had a Latin translation made of all the Novells, for the use of the Western division of the empire, which having been done with great fidelity, was called *Volumen Authenticum*. Thus the imperial system of jurisprudence became comprised in the Pandects, the Institutes, the Codex Repetitæ Prælectionis, and the Novells<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The collection of Gregorianus contained the imperial constitutions from Adrian to Dioclesian, which was succeeded by the *Codex Hermogenianus*, a contemporary with Gregorianus; the former collection having been made in

the year 284, and the latter not long afterwards.

See the account of the Roman law, contained in the works of Charles Butler, of Lincoln's Inn, vol. ii. p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 60—62.

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Concerning these laws, it will be useful to recollect, that the chief of them were published about a century subsequent to the Theodosian code, of which a sufficiently full account has been previously given; and which continued to be the standard formulary of the civil and ecclesiastical laws of the empire until the time when the Justinian code was issued. By an edict of Valentinian III. the Theodosian code became the established law of the Western empire; and having thus prevailed throughout all the provinces of the West, and become incorporate with their laws, and retained by the Goths, Germans, Franks, and all other foreign colonies among whom that portion of the Roman world had long been divided,—it was in the East that the Justinian gained most ascendancy over the Theodosian code, of which it was, indeed, but a new and improved edition, having derived all its fundamental enactments from the more ancient collections.

A sufficient insight into the severe enactments against heresy, embodied in the Theodosian code, having shown that dissent from certain doctrines was punishable by confiscation, by cutting off testamentary privilege, by banishment, by torture, by death, by all the inhuman and horrible ways of inflicting torture and death that inquisitions could devise, a very brief notice of the subsequent legislative decrees in the code of Justinian will be sufficient. The spirit of the atrocious laws, preserved in the code of Theodosius, was maintained in the East as entirely as in the Western part of the empire. They were enlarged and extended by the code of Justinian, in which enactments are contained, that, in the present age, would appear to be no less intolerable than those of Theodosius and his predecessors. Justinian and his assistant legislators, Ulpian, Papinian, and others, have been admired and praised for their sound judgment as the oracles of jurisprudence<sup>9</sup>. Yet none of these eminent civilians were sufficiently wise to perceive that the law of Christ, is the only true philosophy respecting the best mode of abolishing or preventing heresy.

<sup>9</sup> See Gibbon's learned and valuable chapter on Justinian. "Five civilians," says Gibbon, "Caius, Papinian, Paul, Ulpian, and Modestinus, were established as the oracles of jurisprudence.

If their opinions were equally divided, a casting vote was ascribed to the superior wisdom of Papinian."—Gibbon's *Rom. Hist.* vol. iv, chap. xlv. p. 356.

None of the great legal authorities of the day could understand that the growth of the tares together with the wheat, while the wheat was the great object of the husbandman's attention, was the best and only way to prevent the extension of the tares. It was left to the experience of an age so late as our own to discover the profoundness of the philosophy of the New Testament, and to perceive that the wisdom of Christ was the anticipation of the best inferences which could be derived from the study of history. The atrocious, unphilosophical, unchristian, and even barbarous laws of Justinian, could not have been enacted, if the legal advisers of the emperor had been imbued with the holy gentleness of the religion they professed. They would otherwise have taught their imperial master to tolerate rather than to destroy the subjects who differed from him; and to maintain truth to the utmost, without aiming to destroy error by any other means than permission to enquire, and encouraging the discussion of the pretensions and claims of the teachers and doctrines of Christianity.

The laws of Justinian against heretics are principally found in the fifth title of the first book of the code, which treats of heretics, Manichees, and Samaritans. The first law is the same as that in the Theodosian code, which confines the privileges of the faithful to the orthodox only; and to ascertain who is eligible to the privileges of the faithful, it is determined, that he is a heretic who deviates in the slightest degree from the smallest article of the well-considered decisions of the Catholic religion in matters of faith; and from the minutest enactments of the Catholic religion in points of discipline<sup>9</sup>. Another definition is, he is a heretic

<sup>9</sup> *Hæreticus est qui vel levi argumento a iudicio catholice religionis, et tramite, detectus fuerit deviare. These are the words of Arcadius.—Cod. Just. lib. i. tit. v. p. 32, ed. 1663.*

The law defines the Catholic Christians to be,—*qui secundum Apostolicam disciplinam Evangelicamque doctrinam credunt, those who believe according to Apostolic discipline and Evangelical doctrine.—Cod. Theod. lib. xvi. tit. v. § 28.*

And Gratian says, in the same place, *Nihil enim aliud præcipi volumus, quam quod Evangeliorum et Apostolo-*

*rum fides et traditio incorrupta . . . .* “we wish nothing else than that the faith and tradition of the Gospels and Apostles be preserved incorrupt.”

As these emperors, therefore, define the *iudicium* and *tramitem* of the Catholic religion, it evidently follows, that those are heretics who differ from these definitions.

In the definition of Arcadius, says Selvagio, heretics are those who deviate from the *iudicium et trames* of the Catholic religion, i. e. who lay down strongly (*munirent*) a foundation in matters of faith peculiar to themselves,

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who is not orthodox<sup>1</sup>—a comprehensive description, which sanctioned all the subsequent enlargements of the creed, to decide, as controversies arose, who were heretics. An addition was afterwards made, which confines the privileges of dower to orthodox women only.

By the second law all heresies were to cease—none were to teach or learn profane, that is, heretical things. I omit the enactments respecting the appointments of bishops as not relevant to the subject; but I beg the attention of the reader to a point on which a great portion of the justice of the laws before us must unavoidably turn, and that is the meaning of the words 'heresy' and 'heretic,' as they are given in the words of Theodosius and Justinian, and consequently, also, by the writers who have implicitly followed their authority.

The definition in the novells of Justinian is this,—We declare those also to be heretics who are attached to any kind of heresy, and all who are not members of that holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in which are all the holy bishops and patriarchs of the whole world, both of Italy and Rome, and Constantinople and Alexandria, of Theopolis and Jerusalem; and all the bishops who are appointed by them

and propose a doctrine different from the *judicium et troles* of the Catholic religion, and obstinately persist in this new discipline, who defend their error, who are not prepared to search for the truth, nor to be corrected when discovered in error (by catholics).

Heresy is a *human presumption*; *deviare* is to depart from a rule and the royal way (*regiâ viâ*), and obstinately and perversely to defend the error. Whence heresy is *the madness of obstinacy*.

*Vel levi argumento*: *argumentum* does not here mean light suspicion, nor presumption arising from conjecture, nor a bare symptom (*indiciûm*), for to this interpretation the importance (*gravitas*) is opposed; that is, the crime of heresy. It is not even certain proof, for to this interpretation the words *vel levi* are opposed. But *argumentum* is every theme, proposition, title, or article of faith. And the words *vel levi argumentum* are not to be joined to the word *detectus*, but to *deviare*. Whence it is plain, that to deviate, *levi*

*argumento*, from the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic religion, is to deviate even in the slightest article and proposition of faith, and to defend an heretical proposition, however slight it may appear. So that the words *vel levi* do not pertain to the slightness of the proof, but to the apparent lightness of the matter of the proposition. For, however trivial the matter may be in matters of faith, yet is it heresy? By this it appears, that there must also be convincing proof of heresy, not suspicion, or presumption, or conjecture; but a heretic must be *detectus*, found out (to deviate) before he can be condemned.

Therefore a heretic is one who is found to deviate in the smallest particle from the doctrine of the Catholic religion, as well as from its discipline.—See Selvagio, *Instit. Canon.* vol. iii. p. 156.

<sup>1</sup> Justin. *Cod. lib. i. tit. v. c. 12.* Hæreticus est, omnis qui non orthodoxus.

to preach the Apostolic faith and tradition. We justly call those heretics who do not partake of the Holy Communion in the Catholic Church with the bishops, who are honoured of God. Although they give to themselves the title of Christian, still, as they separate themselves from the faith and communion of Christians, we know that they are condemned by the just judgment of God<sup>2</sup>.

It will be observed, that the Church of Rome is here mentioned in the proper manner, as one of the Churches only which held the Apostolic and Catholic faith; and not as the sole depository of the faith, or as the mother and mistress of all the Churches.

The third law deprives heretics of all their places of worship<sup>3</sup>, whether called Churches, or by any other name; and the houses or buildings in which they meet are to be given to the Catholic Church. All meetings, too, even for prayer, whether by day or night, are to be punished by the payment of heavy fines.

The fourth law decrees that all Manichean men or women, and all Donatists, are to be severely punished; and they are to be deprived of the protection universally granted by the laws to all.—We regard, it says, the heresy of Manes and of the Donatists as a public crime against our Divine religion, which is done to the injury of us all; and which we punish with confiscation. We declare them to be neither capable of succession, nor of receiving gifts, nor buying, selling, giving, or contracting; and we decree that the inquisition into

<sup>2</sup> I subjoin the original. It is taken from the *Novellæ* of Justinian. *Hæreticos vero nos dicimus eos qui diversarum sunt hæresium, quibus conjungimus et connumeramus, qui Nestorii Judaicam sequuntur vesaniam, et Eutychianistas et Acephalos, qui Dioscori et Severi mala secta languent, et Manichei et Apollinaris renovantium impietatem: et ad hoc omnes qui non sunt membrum (sic in orig.) sanctæ Dei Catholicæ, et Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ, in quâ omnes concorditer sanctissimi Episcopi, et totius orbis terrarum patriarchæ, et Hesperiae, et Romæ, et hujus regiæ civitatis, et Alexandriæ, et Theopoleos, et Hierosolymorum, et omnes qui sub eos constituti sunt, sanctissimi Episcopi, Apo-*

*stolicam prædicant fidem et traditionem. Igitur sacram communionem in Catholicâ Ecclesiâ non percipientes a Deo amabilibus sacerdotibus, hæreticos juste vocamus. Nam licet nomen Christianorum sibi imponerint; attamen a Christianorum fide et communione separant, Dei judicio semetipsos subdi agnoscentes.—Auth. Collat. viii. tit. x. p. 147, ed. 1663.*

Tertullian calls those only heretics who were obstinate in maintaining, and singular in espousing, an opinion; pertinaci spiritu, opinione singulari.—Tertul. lib. de Præscrip. ap. Gothofred's notes on the Justin. Cod. lib. i. tit. v. l. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Theod. Cod. &c. l. 30.

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such crimes be continued after the death of the heretics<sup>4</sup>. If a man be discovered to have been a Manichean, his last will is to be made void, with all its codicils and provisions. His sons are not to inherit unless they renounce Manicheism; all their favourers, receivers, and accomplices are to be condemned; servants are to denounce their masters, and to be welcomed with gratitude by the Church<sup>5</sup>.

By the fifth law a long list of heretics, especially Manicheans, are commanded to remain no longer in the Roman territory. The Manicheans were to be driven from the cities and put to death, that they might do injury to no one. The law then proceeds to repeat and enforce the enactments of the Theodosian code, and declares all the laws against heresy to be in force. It mentions the places of heretical worship with contempt as mere conventicles, while the heretics who frequent them are commanded never to assemble for worship at all, nor to build any churches for that purpose.

In imitation of the conduct of Constantine, who ordered the Arians to be called by ignoble epithets, heretics were commanded by the sixth law of this part of the code to be branded with the name of their respective founders, and not to be called Christians. None are to dare to keep, read, or discuss their books, which are to be diligently sought for and burnt. No person is even to mention them, nor to hold communion with their authors or readers in any place, house,

<sup>4</sup> See the notes of the learned Cujacius on this law. It is evident that the subsequent monstrous absurdities of the continuance of excommunication after death were founded upon these indefensible laws of Justinian.

<sup>5</sup> This law of Justinian was made the foundation of the law of the Emperor Frederick, and which is accordingly inserted in italics by Gothofred in this part of the code of Justinian, which required every temporal feudal lord to clear his land from heresy when required to do so by the Church. If he shall neglect to do so within one year, his territories are to be granted to the orthodox or catholics, who shall possess the same without resistance, and destroy the heretics. This was the celebrated edict of dethronization when the pope's bulls supplied the

place of imperial law. All receivers and favourers of the heretics were to make satisfaction within one year, or to be declared infamous, and out of the pale of the law. Such a person might reply to others, but they could not reply to him. If he were a judge, his decisions were to be void, and none were to apply to him for justice. If he were an advocate, he could not plead; if a notary, no instrument signed by him was to be of any authority. By virtue of this very law of Justinian, with his own enactment, Frederick was destroyed by the Bishop of Rome of that day.

See the note of Gothofred, and the original of the constitutions of Frederick, inserted in the Justinian code. —Lib. i. tit. v. l. 4.

or field, on pain of excommunication; and no meetings are to be held for the purpose of discussion, either publicly or privately.

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The seventh law provides that none are to be admitted to offices of trust but the orthodox.

The eighth law is the longest and most important of all this part of the code.—Its first decree, that the four first councils are to be venerated, forms a part of the law and articles of the Church in England, and of the other Episcopal Churches generally throughout the world<sup>6</sup>. Its second enactment condemns the Eutychians and Apollinarians; it goes on to command, that any bishop who ordains any of these heretics should be banished; and that such heretics were neither to hold conventicles nor to build churches. If they did so, their houses were to be confiscated to the Church. Those who disobey this humane command were to be fined; and if they were too poor to pay in purse, they were to pay in person, by being beaten with mallets or clubs: whether they were to be beaten to death or not does not appear. Heretics were not to be admitted into the army. If they were there already, they were to be deprived of their rank, and banished from society, whether in the palace, the cities, towns, or provinces. No public discussions were to be held with them. No notice, either in writing or by any other mode, was to be taken of them. None were to keep their books; and all who were convicted of so doing were to be subjected to perpetual banishment. All who kept their books from curiosity, were to be fined very heavily; and those who persisted to teach unlawful doctrines were to be put to death<sup>7</sup>. All their books were to be burnt, and all magistrates who neglected to perform their duty were to be fined ten pounds of gold, a sum equivalent to four hundred pounds.

The ninth law gives to heretics a little earth for charity. We deem it a humane and pious thing, says the insolent

<sup>6</sup> Speaking of the fourth (pseudo) general council, that of Chalcedon, which was holden in the year of the promulgation of this law, I was amused with the expression, that it had been lately held. I may observe here, that

Cyril, not the Bishop of Rome, presided at this council—cui præfuit Cyrillus, beatæ memoriæ, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Ultimo etiam supplicio exerceantur, qui illicita docere tentaverint.

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pity of the decree, to give heretics permission to bury their dead in the usual grounds for burial.

The tenth decree enacts, that any land sold to heretics on which are the churches of the orthodox, shall be confiscated; the purchase being made void for the good of the Church.

The eleventh is the most summary, harsh, and tyrannical. Wherever Manicheans are found, let them be executed; wherever a Manichean is found on the Roman territory, let his head be taken off<sup>8</sup>.

The twelfth decrees that the Manicheans be every where banished and executed. Other heretics—a heretic being merely not one of the orthodox—such as pagans, &c. were to be deprived of rank, office, and magistracy, lest they become the judges of the orthodox and bishops<sup>9</sup>. To this it was added, that when parents are of different religions, the orthodox only shall rule in the matter of education.

The thirteenth law provides, that heretical parents are to maintain, give in marriage, and endow their orthodox sons as the magistrates and bishops direct. The orthodox children of parents are to receive that portion of property which would have been granted to them if their parents had died intestate. If their heretical parents offend them, they are to be brought to trial and punished. Thus the members of a family were made the judges of the religion of each other, and the words were literally fulfilled; “a man’s foes shall be they of his own house.”

The fourteenth law was no less infamous. It decreed, that heretics were not to be permitted to hold meetings, ordinations, baptisms, synods, lands, or abbacies, nor defend them by law, nor take charge of them by themselves or others, nor do any thing prohibited. The penalty of disobedience to this law was, death.

By the fifteenth law, Manicheans were commanded to leave their property to their orthodox children only.

<sup>8</sup> Græca constitutio, Anastasii, aut Justiniani, ejus epitome, ubicunque Manichæi inveniantur, capite dammandi sunt. Alia ex Eclog. Βασίλ. *ἐπὶ Μανυχαίων*, Manichæo in loco Romano degere deprehensio caput amputator.

<sup>9</sup> This law proves the forgery of the Novell of Valentinian, which is said to have conferred on the bishops the privilege of being brought to trial solely before their own order.

The sixteenth provided the most extraordinary precaution against Manicheism, by enacting, that if a convert from Manicheism were found guilty of doing any thing which savoured of his former error, or if he conversed with a Manichee without denouncing him to a competent tribunal, he was to be put to death. Self-denunciation, or friend-denunciation, were no less commanded by the canon or inquisitorial laws of Spain, than in this statute of Justinian; which, besides decreeing that all Manichees be denounced, commands the surrender of all heretical books to the magistrates, in order that they may be burnt.

The seventeenth law commanded that the synagogues of the Samaritans were to be destroyed; that the orthodox only should make wills, settlements, or deeds of gift, and that bishops were directed to see that property bequeathed by heretics should be confiscated to the benefit of the Church.

The eighteenth law applied to the Samaritans all the former edicts against heretics.

By the nineteenth law the children, and if they have no children, the nearest relations of the orthodox were to inherit their property. If no relations claimed it, it was to go to the public treasury.

Gothofred insists, in this part of the code, that the celebrated bull, *Excommunicamus*, which is still read yearly at Rome, and by which certain heresies and heretics, ourselves among the number, are declared infamous, and pronounced to be under a ban, their goods confiscated, and their sons declared to be incapable of succession to their property; is still only without force from want of power to execute its provisions. The reason upon which all ecclesiastical severity is justified, is affixed to this bull, that it is a greater crime to offend eternal than temporal majesty. By the same law, all who are *suspected* of heresy, are declared infamous, unless within one year they prove themselves, or are proved to be innocent.

The twentieth law is an epitome, or recapitulation of the former. Heretics who baptize are outlawed.

The twenty-first decrees, that heretics are not to be admitted as witnesses against the orthodox, though they may

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be against each other ; and the twenty-second law confirms the provisions of the former.

The two next titles of this book of the code of Justinian so much resemble the two corresponding divisions in the Theodosian code, that I shall not dwell upon them <sup>1</sup>.

The eighth division of this book of the code treats of the respect to be shown to the sign of the cross.

The ninth re-enacts the decisions of Theodosius against Jews and idolaters, and adds to them the punishment of death to the Jew who converts a Christian <sup>2</sup>.

The tenth confirms the law which forbids a Jew and a pagan to possess any Christian slave ; and forbids the former from admitting him into his religion <sup>3</sup>.

The eleventh enforces the edicts of Theodosius and the former emperors against the pagan temples and sacrifices, and decrees death to those who attempt to divine by sacrificing.

The recapitulation of these latter laws proves the difficulty of eradicating, at once, the remains of the dominant superstition ; and affords another argument against intolerance. Truth, slowly but surely, conquers and will conquer ; but its best triumphs are those which are independent of human laws and magisterial or legislatorial interference.

At the end of Gothofred's edition of the code, we find the constitutions called, the *Novellæ*, or *Authenticæ*. These, as before intimated, were the edicts which Justinian published after the last edition of the code. The enactments of these *novellæ* confirm and extend the preceding laws against heretics and heresy. I have mentioned some, from the tenth title of the eighth collection, and it would be tedious to enlarge further on this part of the subject. All the intolerant rescripts and laws, however, against heretics and heresy, are declared to be promulgated, that all may know how great

<sup>1</sup> The sixth is intituled, *Ne Sanctum Baptisma iteretur*. The seventh, *De Apostatis*.

<sup>2</sup> How changed for the better, in many respects, the civilized portion of mankind has become ! Let us picture to ourselves the indignation we should have felt in England, if the rabbi who

converted the London-riots ringleader, Lord George Gordon, had been hanged at Newgate for his pious Judaism towards his noble but unfortunate convert.

<sup>3</sup> *Ne Christianum mancipium Judæus possideat, vel circumcidet.*

was the care of the emperor for the Lord Christ, the true God of our faith, and for the salvation of the souls of his subjects<sup>4</sup>. The affirmation may be true. It proves only that his zeal was greater than his wisdom.

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Various imperial constitutions of the more immediate successors of Justinian are also appended to the civil law. They are not, however, generally considered as a part of that law<sup>5</sup>, which consists solely of the pandects, institutes, code, and novells. It will, therefore, be enough to say further of them, that they maintain, in religious matters, the same spirit of intolerance which characterizes the laws of his predecessors. The Emperor Leo proceeded further than even Justinian. He commanded the Jews to live according to the manner of the Christians<sup>6</sup>, an edict which follows some wise enactments, that all are to rest from labour on the Lord's Day. A revolter to Judaism was to be severely punished by the same law. A law of Heraclius banished the Jews from Constantinople, and commanded them not to come within three miles of the city<sup>7</sup>. These constitutions are continued to the reign of Michael Palæologus. It is only necessary to say of them, with respect to their enactments regarding religion, that none of the emperors appear to have considered toleration to be either the duty of sovereigns, or the privilege of subjects. The will of the emperor was the sole criterion of truth. The imperial mandate was regarded as the best arbiter of controversies, provided the orthodox was satisfied, and the heretic was helpless.

The time was soon to arrive when these sacerdotal usurpations were to yield to the papal supremacy, and the imperial power was to be given to one bishop of Rome, rather than to the bishops of the empire. We must now leave the civil princes of the earth, who had succeeded in establishing the ecclesiastical authority of the rulers of the Churches over their people; to consider that stupendous dominion which grasped the sceptre of the Cæsars—which executed to the utmost the laws of that imperial intolerance, and which enforced

<sup>4</sup> Ut cognoscant omnes quanta et quæ nobis cura est, et veræ circa Dominum Christum verum Deum fidei, et nostrorum subditorum salutis.—Epilogus ad tit. x. nov. cix. Auth. Coll. viii.

<sup>5</sup> Butler on the Roman Law, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Imp. Leonis Constit. lv.

<sup>7</sup> Imper. Constit. Heraclii II. at the end of Gothofred's Justinian, p. 409.

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with decision, energy, and cruelty, the most atrocious principles of its once powerful masters, till mankind revolted from the yoke. I shall, therefore, only add, respecting the laws of Justinian—that so much of them is good and excellent, that, though very many of them may be said to be superseded, the civil law, as an indisputable authority, has obtained either a general or partial admittance into the jurisprudence of nearly all the governments of Europe; and even where it is least favourably received, it has been regarded with great deference and respect. This could not have happened, had not it been deeply and extensively grounded on principles of justice and equity; applicable, excepting always in many of its religious decrees, to the public and private concerns of mankind, at all times, and in every situation<sup>8</sup>. The principal enactments of the Theodosian code, as we have already seen, were embodied in the breviary of Anianus; and so became the general law of the western empire. The codes of Justinian, as a body of Roman law, ceased to be the law of the western empire when the exarchate of Ravenna—the last Italian possession of the emperors, was conquered by the barbarians in the year 753. This year is universally assigned as the æra of the final extinction of the Roman law in Italy. The result of all these laws was the establishment over the catholic Church of Christ, of the power of the Church of Rome; the gradual progress of which Church we must now consider: by surveying the actions of each Bishop of Rome from its earliest times, till the beginning of the reign of Justinian.

In the reign of Tiberius certain Jews resided at Rome. In compliance with the law of Moses, which required the adult children of Israel to present themselves four times in the year at Jerusalem, a certain number were present at that city on the day of Pentecost; when the cloven tongues of fire rested on the heads of the one hundred and twenty disciples of Christ, and demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was the expected Messiah by the fulfilment of his promise—that He would pour forth this divine proof of his power from heaven, to which He had ascended. These persons, on their return to Rome, would doubtlessly report to their countrymen the things they had seen and heard. Twenty years after the day

<sup>8</sup> See Butler on the Roman Law, p. 64.

of Pentecost, St. Paul addressed an epistle to a certain number of converts at Rome, without alluding to any particular person as the founder of their society. In subsequent ages, St. Peter was affirmed to have been the first instructor of the Roman Jews and proselytes; who constituted the earliest Church in that city. No contemporary evidence confirms the tradition. It is said in the Book of the Acts, that on his escaping from the prison in which he had been confined by Herod, he went to *another* place. That place is said by some to have been Antioch; by others, Rome. It is utterly impossible to ascertain the truth. The most learned writer of the Church of England, Bishop Pearson, as well as Baratier, a protestant of Utrecht, confirms the general tradition, which is supported by Ignatius, Eusebius, Jerome, and others—that he was certainly at Rome. If he were ever there, his influence must have been very great among the Jews who embraced Christianity; while the influence of St. Paul would be no less great among the Gentile converts, to whom he was the principal apostle. Dr. Burton adopts, therefore, this opinion, apparently on sufficient evidence, that both these teachers may be considered as the joint founders of the Church of Rome—that St. Peter appointed the first instructor of the Jews; and St. Paul, that of the Gentiles; and that, after the death of one of these, the survivor was regarded as the bishop of the whole congregation. He is of opinion also, that this, if fact, sufficiently explains and reconciles the discordant testimonies respecting the first Bishops of Rome. However this may be, twelve centuries after the death of St. Peter, the Bishops of Rome possessed and wielded an authority which had never been exercised by any civil potentate; and which was neither claimed nor imagined by the early bishops of Rome. It may be advisable to mark the progress of this power, by enumerating the actions of the several bishops of Rome, which both became precedents for the conduct of their successors, and the basis also of the stupendous authority of the papacy over the consciences of Christians spiritually; and therefore, over the laws of states, empires, and nations temporally<sup>9</sup>. We will first trace the progress of this singular

<sup>9</sup> The references for these accounts of the gradual progression, act by act, and step by step, of the power of the Bishops of Rome, are to be found in Mornay du Plessis, *Mysterium Iniquitatis*—Baronius, on the several years

BOOK II. dominion from the death of Peter to the æra of Justinian—  
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## FIRST CENTURY.

Succession of Popes.	Date of death.	Memorable events relating to the spiritual or temporal power of the papacy.
I. St. Peter and St. Paul . . . }	66	None recorded. Spiritual instruction only.
II. Linus . . . .	78	Some decrees are ascribed to him by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who flourished in the ninth century.
III. Anacletus or Cletus. }	91	The three decrees ascribed to him by the false decretals are considered spurious, none being regarded as genuine before the time of Siricius, A.D. 384. (See Fleury, Eccl. Hist. l. xlv. n. 22.)
IV. Clement I. . .	100	Writes an Epistle of admonition and gentleness to the Corinthians, which was read in many churches. Irenæus, l. iii. c. 3. Euseb. l. iii. c. xvi. and xxxviii. lib. iv. c. xxiii.

## SECOND CENTURY.

Act of spiritual or temporal power.

V. Evaristus . . .	109	Said in two decretals to have distributed the parishes of Rome, and ordered that every bishop should be attended in preaching by seven deacons. Baronius Ann. 121.
VI. Alexander . .	119	Institutes the use of holy water.—Platina.
VII. Sixtus I. . .	127	The false Decretal affirms, that he assumed the title of universal bishop.—Pagi in Vit. Sixt.
VIII. Telesphorus .	139	Said to have instituted Lent.—Baron. Ann. 154.
IX. Hyginus . . .	142	Affirmed by the spurious Decretals to have instituted godfathers and godmothers, and the ceremony of consecrating churches.
X. Pius I. . . .	157	Marcion the heretic is rejected by the Church. This is affirmed by Baronius to have been the origin of appeals to Rome.—Bellarm. l. ii. c. 21. Baronius affirms, but he is contradicted by Scaliger, that this bishop commanded the Festival of Easter to be kept on a Sunday.—Baron. ad Ann. 159. Euseb. Chron. note Scalig. p. 119.

to which the events recorded belong—Muratori — Anastasius — Bingham — Bower's Lives of the Popes—Alfordi Annales — Gieseler — Waddington — Spanheim — The Vade Mecum of Johnson, or a Collection of Canons, in two volumes, at the end of the second volume of which is an Ab-

stract of the Decrees of some of the chief Popes before Justinian.—Donoghue's History of the Church and Court of Rome; and the other authorities quoted on particular Pontificates and events, by which the papal power was especially advanced.

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- XI. Anicetus . . 168 Anicetus celebrates Easter in the manner afterwards decreed by the Council of Nice to be right, and which has since been generally adopted ; but which was opposite to the custom adopted by the Eastern Churches. Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, comes to Rome to discuss the matter. Both bishops adhere to their own decision ; but both meet at the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the elements being consecrated by Polycarp. Difference of opinion and religious practice was not now the cause of mutual excommunication, nor of dogmatic decree. The absurdity of the Decretals ascribed to this bishop concerning sacerdotal tonsure, primates, archbishops, &c., as well as those ascribed to his predecessors and successors down to Miltiades, is shown by Du Pin, p. 117—on the false Decretals.
- XII. Soter . . . 177 The Decretals ascribed to this bishop abound with passages from Ithacius, Leo, and other subsequent writers.—Du Pin, p. 177. His charities to the poor deservedly increase the influence of the See of Rome.
- XIII. Eleutherus . 193 The martyrs of Lyons write to this bishop on the subject of Montanus. Councils are held in Asia without consulting or regarding the Bishop of Rome. Beda affirms that this bishop decreed the appointment of Easter on the 14th of the full moon. Beda first, and after him the monks, mention the mission into Britain of King Lucius.

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- XIV. Victor . . . 202 Refuses to communicate with the Theodosians, who denied the divinity of Christ ; but approves of the false prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla, being, it is said, deceived by Praxeas. He commences intolerance in matters not essential to salvation, by separating from communion all the Churches of Asia, who refused to keep Easter in the Roman manner ; for which he is condemned by Irenæus, and by the Asiatic bishops, who despise his censures, as possessing no authority to reprove them. Separation from communion at this time, did not imply the authoritative excommunication of subsequent ages.
- XV. Zephyrinus . 219 Opposes the Theodosians. Is said by Baronius to have condemned Praxeas, who affirmed

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- the doctrine of the Patripassians. The title of Bishop of Bishops given to the Pope by Tertullian. The Protestants affirm it to have been given ironically—the Romanists, with Baronius, deferentially.
- XVI. Callistus I. . . 223 The institution of Ember Weeks falsely ascribed to this bishop. The Church at peace.
- XVII. Urban I. . . 230 Many wonderful but fabulous acts ascribed to him, resting on no contemporary evidence.
- XVIII. Pontian . . 235 Confirms the sentence of Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, against Origen, after assembling the clergy on the subject.
- XIX. Anterus . . . 236 Dies a martyr.
- XX. Fabian . . . 250 A dove is said to have rested upon him when the people and clergy were about to elect a bishop; upon which he is chosen. Appoints seven deacons and seven subdeacons over the fourteen wards into which Rome was divided. The clergy of Rome govern the city after his martyrdom, for sixteen months, during which time they correspond with Cyprian; and decree, that one bishop ought not to condemn without the approbation of many,—for crimes committed by many, could not be judged by one.—Cyp. Ep. 31.
- XXI. Cornelius . . . 252 Said, by Cyprian, to have been elected by the people and clergy, with the approbation of his episcopal colleagues: but opposed unjustly by Novatian, and supported by the African bishops, and by Cyprian, who was called Pope, as were all other bishops. Summons a council against the Novatians; and another on the reception of the penitents, on their acknowledging him, and not Novatian to be Bishop of Rome.
- XXII. Lucius I. . . 255 Martyred.
- XXIII. Stephen . . . 257 Cyprian, in his Treatise on the Unity of the Church, which was given to the world about this time, declares, of the government of the Church, that it was but one bishopric, of which every bishop held his part<sup>1</sup>. The bishops were all in communion with, but independent of each other. To maintain the purity of their common faith, they wrote letters on incipient heresies, acts of discipline, and recommendations of friends to each other. Soon after Stephen was elected bishop, he

<sup>1</sup> These circumstances have been already alluded to, but they are so important to the elucidation of the subject on which we are at present engaged, that a recapitulation is unavoidable.

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violated the laws of the Universal Church, by refusing to acknowledge the right of the neighbouring Churches to regulate their own discipline. He began the first usurpation, which was so generally continued by his successors. Two Spanish bishops—Basilides of Asturia, and Martial of Merida, sacrificed to idols in the time of persecution. They were deposed by their brethren. They fled to Rome. Stephen, contrary to the law of the Catholic Church, received them into communion. They returned to Spain, and resumed their duties. The Spanish bishops write to the bishops of Africa. Cyprian summons a council and reads their letters. The conduct of Stephen is warmly condemned: and Sabinus and Felix are declared to be the bishops of Asturia and Merida, as the Spanish bishops had decided. Another event took place in the time of this bishop. In the matter of rebaptizing of heretics, Stephen had decided in the negative, Cyprian in the affirmative. A letter, according to the catholic custom, was sent to Stephen from Cyprian, and a council of seventy-one African bishops was held. This letter abounded in expressions of charity and good will. Stephen replied to it, in terms which Cyprian severely rebuked and condemned. The bishop of Rome used the ever celebrated argument for supremacy, from the founding of his see by St. Peter. He professes to despise the decrees of the African bishops. He actually commands Cyprian (who bore, like himself, the title of Pope, and whose influence was so great that he was said by Gregory Nazianzen—in *Laudem Cypriani*—to preside not only over the Churches of Carthage and Africa, but also over the East, West, North, and South) to change his opinion; and he threatens to separate from communion all who differed with him, and who rebaptized heretics. He addressed to the same effect the Eastern bishops, who replied by condemning his insolent conduct; and wrote to Cyprian—"that the Bishop of Rome excommunicated himself by separating himself from so many Churches—and they declared him to be a schismatic, departing voluntarily from the unity of the Church." So different was the Catholic Church of the

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- age of Cyprian from the Church of Rome. When the deputies from Africa waited on Stephen at Rome, he refused them the common rights of hospitality. He excommunicated all the council, and with them all the Eastern bishops who agreed with them. His excommunication was despised. Its very extravagance prevented a schism: but the precedent was now given which was acted upon when the power of Rome was enabled, in after ages, to convulse states and empires; and to depose any temporal or spiritual opponent of any decision decreed by the Church of Rome.
- XXIV. Sixtus II. . . 258 This bishop is supposed to have rescinded the decrees of Stephen at the remonstrances of Dionysius of Alexandria. The opinion of Cyprian, that heretics should be rebaptized, was acted upon at their pleasure by the clergy, till it was condemned by the council of Arles in 314, and of Nice in 325. The Catholic Church in council, and not the Bishop of Rome, suppressed the practice of the African bishops. The Catholic Church has always been different from the Church of Rome. The name ought never to be given exclusively to that Church.
- XXV. Dionysius . . . 259 The bishops of the Catholic Church, at this time, exercised a vigilant jealousy over each other. Paul of Samosata was accused by his Church before the Bishop of Alexandria; and afterwards before Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea. In the same manner, the Bishop of Alexandria, who had adopted an error respecting the person of Christ, in a work written against Sabellius, was accused before the Bishop of Rome. The Bishop of Alexandria wrote another work to prove the falsehood of the charge. This defence is regarded by Baronius to be a proof, at this early time, of the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome; whereas, all bishops of the Catholic Church sent, and received, letters of this nature. All reproved, and condemned, and defended themselves to each other. When Paul of Samosata was condemned, the council which condemned him wrote letters equally to the Bishops of Alexandria and Rome. When appeal was made to Aurelian by the Catholics of Samosata against their bishop, who retained his episcopal house against his newly-elected successor,

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		the emperor decided that he should be bishop whom the bishops of Rome and Italy acknow- ledge. All bishops were equal. The supre- macy of Rome was unknown or unallowed.	
XXVI. Felix I. . .	274	Martyred under Aurelian. No act of power recorded.	
XXVII. Eutychianus .	283		
XXVIII. Caius . . .	296		
XXIX. Marcellinus .	304	The fabulous council of Sinuessa is affirmed to have required this bishop to accuse himself of the crime of giving up the Scriptures during Dioclesian's persecution, because no one might accuse the first bishop. The non-existence of this council is shown by Bower. (l. 82.)	
XXX. Marcellus . . .	310	Said to have been hated for maintaining the discipline of the Church.—Baron. ad Ann. 309.	
XXXI. Eusebius . . .	310	Banished by Maxentius for upholding disci- pline.	
XXXII. Melchiades, or Miltiades . . .	314	Requested by Constantine, in conjunction with three bishops of Gaul, to consider the con- duct of the Donatists.	
XXXIII. Sylvester . .	335	The pretended donation of Constantine, forged between 756 and 779. The power over the Catholic Church was now held by the Em- peror, and a General Council ; the Bishop of Rome being regarded as one only of the prin- cipal bishops, invited with others to the Councils of Arles and Nice. Baronius, and most other Roman Catholic historians, affirm that Sylvester presided at Nice in the person of Hosius of Corduba, who was but the Pope's legate— <i>à latere</i> . Of this there is no contem- porary evidence. No acts of authority are assigned to Sylvester ; and the Council of Nice decreed that all causes should be tried by provincial synods. It does not recognize any power or supremacy in the Bishop of Rome. The equality of bishops in the Ca- tholic Church at this time, is demonstrated by the acts of Constantine. He assimilated the ecclesiastical and civil polity so as to produce in the Church the same kind of distinctions regarding rank which prevailed in the state. Till this time, the Catholic Church preserved the equality of bishops ; and acknowledged only the three orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon.	
XXXIV. Marcus . . .	336	This bishop is said to have written a letter to Athanasius, and to other bishops in Egypt,	

in which he assumed to himself the title of Universal Bishop. (See Mornay du Plessis. *Mysterium Iniquitatis*, chap. v. at the beginning.) This letter must have been forged. The title was assumed nearly three centuries after by the Bishop of Constantinople, who was reproved for so doing by Gregory, before it was adopted by the bishops of Rome. It is not probable that it was assumed by Mark. The few documents, however, which relate to the history of this period cannot be depended upon.

- XXXV. Julius I. . . 352 This Bishop became the protector of Athanasius, and consequently deservedly obtained great moral and spiritual influence in the Catholic Church. Both the Eusebians and Athanasians appealed to Julius. In so doing they materially strengthened the authority of the Bishop of Rome. Julius heard the cause of Athanasius in a synod assembled for that purpose. He decided in his favour; and wrote, requiring the Eastern bishops to restore him to his see. Constantius, on their refusal to do this (so greatly had the power or influence of the Church increased), threatened to make war on the East. Under this threat, a council of both the Eastern and Western bishops is summoned to attend at Sardica, in Dacia<sup>2</sup>. The Eastern bishops refuse, it is said, to appear. The Western meet, and resolve to restore Athanasius. This council, undoubtedly called in consequence of the flight of Athanasius from the East to Rome, is said to have published certain canons which laid the foundation of continued appeals to Rome by all bishops and others, who deemed themselves unjustly treated by their Episcopal equals in their several churches. Du Pin doubts their authenticity. Geddes has written a brief treatise to demonstrate the spuriousness of the Vth and VIth canons, on which the claim of the right of judging principally rests. He shows that these canons were not known by the African Churches sixty-eight years after<sup>3</sup>. Athanasius, in his letters, in which he speaks so much of the Sardican council, takes no notice of such canons. They were not known

<sup>2</sup> See Geddes' *Essay on the Canons of Sardica*. London, 8vo, 1706.

<sup>3</sup> See Johnson on the *Sardican Canons*, ii. 161—165.

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to the Western bishops who wrote, fifty years after the council, to Theodosius, requesting him to call a general council. They expressly, on the contrary, disclaim the authority of the see of Rome. Pope Innocent I., sixty years after this council, had not heard of them; for he told the Eastern clergy that the Roman Church admitted no canons but those of Nice. When Pope Zosimus, one hundred years after the Council of Sardica, appealed to these canons as a part of those of Nice, and affirmed this to the African bishops, no such canons could be found in any of the authentic copies which those bishops caused to be examined in the East. They are first mentioned by Dionysius Exiguus, who lived two hundred years after the Sardican Council; and even after the affirmation of their authority was made, they possessed no influence either in the East or West. The general law—the wise law of the Catholic Church—was that of Nice, that all appeals must be made from, and by, bishops to their metropolitans; and if the metropolitan refuses to do justice, the ultimate appeal is to be made to a synod or council. So different at this time was the Church of Christ from the Church of Rome.

XXXVI. Liberius . . 366 This bishop inflicted a heavy blow upon the respect given to the Church of Rome by the Athanasians. He received the letters of Athanasius addressed to his predecessor, and not only decided against him, but proceeded so far as to excommunicate him. He signs also a creed, not affirming, in the language of the Nicene Creed, the divinity of Christ. This was a most disastrous era for the Church. Arianism, at one part of the episcopacy of Liberius, had nearly prevailed over the true doctrine of Revelation respecting the Deity of Christ.

XXXVII. Damasus . . 384 The bishopric of Rome had now become an object of ambition. A general sedition rages in Rome on the occasion of his election, and one hundred and sixty persons were killed and wounded in one day. The historian, Marcellinus<sup>4</sup>, describes the pomp, grandeur, luxury, and outward dignity of the Bishop of Rome in the most severe and graphic language. The Emperor Valentinian III. in-

<sup>4</sup> P. 373, edit. Gronov. 1693.



creased the power of the Bishop of Rome at this period, by enacting (if the law as we find it in the Theodosian Code be not spurious) that this pontiff might examine and judge other bishops—that religious and ecclesiastical disputes might not be decided by profane and secular judges, but by a bishop of the same religion and his colleagues. Some bishops who assembled in a council at Rome, in 378, after expressing their approbation of this law, presented an address to the Emperor Gratian, begging him to enforce this law for the honour of their office. They extended their exemption from responsibility to the secular tribunals, to civil as well as ecclesiastical causes. The Bishop of Rome received this power, at this period, as a grant from the emperor. *He claimed it not by divine right.* It is doubtful whether the authority thus allowed him extended further than the suburbicarian provinces, over which he possessed jurisdiction by the authority of the Council of Nice. Others believe that the powers extended over all who were implicated in the schisms of that day. At this time, also, the law of Valentinian was passed, to restrain the avarice of the Roman clergy. The influence of the Bishop of Rome was further increased at this time by an appeal made by Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, to Damasus; requesting that he would send deputies to the East, to endeavour to heal the schisms there prevalent<sup>5</sup>. Damasus at first took no notice of the request. When he did so, he acted as a judge; and though by rashly condemning some of the orthodox instead of the Arians, he incurred the reproaches of Basil, still the power of the see increased in consequence of his arbitrary conduct. He further added, also, to the influence of his see, by summoning, on his own authority, a council to condemn Apollinaris. Some resistance was made by the Bishops of Parma, and others who had been deposed by Damasus in consequence of the law of Valentinian. Their effort, however, was in vain. Other bishops of Italy sent a letter to the Emperor Gratian, petitioning him to establish a law, which may be regarded as another principal foundation of

<sup>5</sup> Vita S. Basilii, cap. xvii., prefixed to the third volume of the Bened. edition of the writings of that father.

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the subsequent demands and usurpations of the Bishop of Rome. *The civil power, in complying with their request, still further weakened its own, and strengthened the ecclesiastical sceptre.* They petitioned, first, that all bishops condemned by the Bishop of Rome, or other Catholic bishops, presuming to retain their sees, should be banished from their bishoprics. Secondly, that all who refused to appeal before the bishops, their brethren, should be judged at Rome. Thirdly, that appeals might be made by bishops from their metropolitans to Rome; and that metropolitans should, if accused, be judged at Rome. In behalf of the Bishop of Rome, they begged, as he was above other bishops by the prerogative of the apostolic see, though on a level with them as a bishop; he might only be judged by a council, or by the Emperor himself. This petition proves to us the identification of the interests of the bishops generally with the see of Rome. The Emperor granted the former part of their request, but takes no notice of their petition respecting the Bishop of Rome individually. The influence of the bishopric of Rome increased daily more and more, though the Bishop of Rome had not as yet claimed the loftier privileges of ordering all things both in heaven—as when the angels were commanded to take the souls of the crusaders to God;—or, in earth, when the imperial power was declared to be inferior to the ecclesiastical.—Another act of usurpation, or rather of ecclesiastical authority by this bishop, may be regarded as a still more solid foundation of the subsequent claims to the dominion over the Universal Church, by the successors of Damasus. The Emperor Theodosius was requested by many bishops to call another general council. He declined to comply with the request. Application was then made by the Italian bishops to Gratian. At this council Damasus presided.—Another step to the subsequent supremacy was taken by this bishop, which proved to be no less important to the eventual power of the Bishop of Rome. In the year 379, Dacia and Greece, which had belonged to the Western empire, were added by Gratian to the Eastern empire.

The bishops of Rome had exercised some jurisdiction over the provinces. When they were separated from the civil power, the Bishop of Rome refused to resign his superintendence over him ; and appointed a new officer in the Church, to whom he gave the name of Vicar, directing him to perform several duties which, as mere bishops, they had not power to do ; but which they were to effect by virtue of authority from the Bishop of Rome. Damasus appointed Ascholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, to this office<sup>6</sup>. The other metropolitans resisted the authority ; but, as usual, they resisted in vain. The power of the Popes' vicars continued to increase with the increasing power of Rome itself. They extended the influence of that see ; and gradually destroyed the power both of bishops and metropolitans in their respective provinces and districts. The institution of vicars, who were permanently resident, was improved into that of legates, who were the missionary representatives of the bishops of Rome.

XXXVIII. Siricius . . . 398 Himerius, Bishop of Tarragona, in Spain, consulted this bishop on certain points of discipline. This Bishop of Rome continued and increased the lofty style of his predecessors ; and answered Himerius in the language of a superior, and not of an equal. The decrees of Siricius—for such his answers to Himerius must be called—were collected by Dionysius Exiguus, and afterwards added to the code of the Universal Church. They are translated and published by Johnson at the end of the second volume of his work on the Canon Law<sup>7</sup>. He commands, by his own authority, that the heretics who have been baptized, and who recant, shall be received into the Church without rebaptism, by the imposition of hands ; that baptism to adults be granted only at Easter and Pentecost ; that apostates be only reconciled at death ; with many other things of the same severe nature. His power over the Western Churches enabled him to give to these injunctions the force of public law. He com-

<sup>6</sup> See Constant. Decret. l. 534, where it is shown that the attempt had been

successful before, A.D. 380.

<sup>7</sup> See also Labb. Concil. ii. 1017.

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manded, in the seventh article of his reply to Himerius, the celibacy of the clergy. Those who defended their marriage by the example of the Aaronical priests were to be deposed. This point of discipline had been recommended, but never enjoined, both by St. Paul and by the early churches. The progress of the papal despotism over the Catholic Church was marked by the increasing severity with which clerical celibacy was enforced in spite of all resistance, till the decree of celibacy became as it now remains—the criterion of the clergy's adherence or non-adherence to the cause of Rome.—Another proof of the ever-enlarging power of that Church was given at this time by the influence of Siricius over the usurper, Maximus. He appealed to that emperor against the real or supposed errors of the Priscillianists in Spain. Many of them were consequently put to death by the civil power on the appeal of the ecclesiastical<sup>8</sup>.—The power of the Church of Rome over the Catholic Church was still further extended by this bishop, by a decree which he procured from a council summoned at Rome, which ordained that none should presume to consecrate a bishop without the knowledge and consent of the Apostolic see. Many, indeed, believe this decree to be spurious. Whether it be so or not, it is of very early date; and must have been forged in the name of Siricius soon after this period. The question is discussed in the notes to Bower.—A yet further exercise of the incipient papal power characterized the present period. Jovinian, the learned and exemplary friend of Jerome, embraced certain opinions respecting the mother of Christ which Jerome condemned. Siricius summoned a council at Rome to condemn them also. When they did so, he excommunicated him and his friends. Jovinian appealed to Ambrose at Milan. The papal mandate followed him to that city, and procured his expulsion. The Emperor Honorius condemned Jovinian and his coadjutors to be punished with whips armed with lead<sup>9</sup>. So early did the

<sup>8</sup> Labb. Concil. ii. 1034, 1035.

<sup>9</sup> Id. 1028, seqq.

cruelties of the ecclesiastical power, calling on the civil power, begin to torment the most spiritual and eminent Christians.

The independence, however, of the several churches was not yet entirely destroyed. On the occasion of the election of Evagrius, as the successor of Paulinus in the see of Antioch, several bishops, and among them the Bishop of Rome, adhered to his communion. Others, however, adhered to the cause of his competitor, Flavianus. Both candidates were required by the Emperor Theodosius to submit their cause, not to the Bishop of Rome, but to a council at Capua, who referred the same to the Bishops of Egypt. Flavianus refused to submit to this decision. Siricius wrote to Theodosius to beg him to send Flavianus to Rome. The emperor complied. Flavianus immediately offered to resign the see of Antioch rather than submit to Siricius. He would not acknowledge the right of the Bishop of Rome to judge him. The emperor continued him in the see of Antioch; and seventeen years after he was reconciled to the Bishop of Rome, without any act of submission, by the interference of the celebrated Chrysostom.—So slowly did the Church of Rome progress in its dominion over the Catholic Church; and so universal was the opposition, as Du Plessis has shown, to every step of that progress. Flavianus requested communion to be restored between himself and Siricius, after the death of Evagrius, without any compromise, submission, or servility<sup>1</sup>.—Another proof was afforded of the same slowness of the progress to the domination of the Roman over the Catholic Church. Bonosus, the Bishop of Naissus, was accused of heresy and violation of the canons. The cause was committed to the neighbouring bishops. He was condemned. He appealed, not to Rome, but to Ambrose at Milan. Ambrose recommended submission to the sentence. The bishops who had condemned him wrote to Siricius to request him to approve of their decision. Siricius, however, informed them in reply, that he

<sup>1</sup> See *Art de Vérif. les Dates*, i. 235, edit. fol.

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was not empowered to judge the cause ; for the province over which Bonosus had been appointed, together with them, had been committed to their charge by the Council of Capua. He thus acknowledged, great as his desire seems to have been to extend the influence of his see, the superiority of a council to himself ; and disclaims that universal power over the Catholic Church which his successors so unscrupulously affirm. Siricius enlarged, however, the basis of the papal power, and prepared the way by his edicts to the Western bishops for the eventual supremacy over the independent Episcopal Churches, which constituted, in their aggregate, the Catholic Church of Christ. The third Council of Carthage, in the episcopate of Siricius, decrees, that the bishop of the first see should not be called the Prince, or Chief, but the *Bishop* only of that see. (Conc. Carth. III. c. 26.) The African bishops also decreed, that the primate of every province, with three bishops, was to ordain a bishop. They call, also, the *Chair of the Metropolitan*, the *First Chair* ; or Chief See<sup>2</sup>. Siricius is said to have introduced the commemoration of saints into the services of the Church. The Christians began to imitate many customs of the heathens.

XXXIX. Anastasius . 401  
or  
402<sup>3</sup>.

The policy of the several churches from the earliest ages has been to condemn the books of heretics. Anastasius condemned the works of Origen ; and separated, also, from communion, Ruffinus, the learned friend, but afterwards the no less learned enemy of Jerome. The independence, however, of the churches was not yet destroyed. The contest had only begun between the Church of Rome and the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Aquileia, as an independent officer of the Universal Church, continued to communicate with Ruffinus. Not only so, the bishops of Africa, after considering an opinion of this Bishop of Rome, respecting the Donatists, declined compliance with

<sup>2</sup> See the remarks on this synod, with references to several authorities, in Mornay du Plessis. Prog. p. 47, 4to. Gorich. 1662.

<sup>3</sup> Pagi places his death Dec. 14, 401, but Tillenont thinks there is reason to conclude that he lived until 27 April, 402. Muratori agrees with Pagi.

his counsel. They never seemed to imagine that he had authority over them.

## FIFTH CENTURY.

- XL. Innocent I. . 417 The custom among the bishops of the Catholic Church of corresponding with each other for the purpose of giving mutual counsel, or obtaining information on difficult points, was now very prevalent. Chrysostom had been deposed at Constantinople by Theophylus, Bishop of Alexandria. Theophylus wrote to Innocent on the subject. Chrysostom also sent to the Bishop of Rome a statement of his case ; but not to him only. Though the see of Rome was, at this time, justly honoured for its zeal, piety, and attachment to the orthodox faith, and for its hospitality to those who fled from the Arian and other heterodox persecutors ; it was not deemed to be supreme over the churches of the one Catholic Church. Chrysostom wrote to the Bishop of Rome, and Chromatius, Bishop of Aquileia<sup>4</sup>. In consequence, however, of the increasing power, influence, and virtue of Innocent, bishops of both parties appear to have been most anxious to conciliate him. Innocent recommended the calling of a council, and wrote to Honorius on the subject. When all his efforts failed to remedy the treatment which Chrysostom and his friends had endured from the Arians, and when Honorius was prevented by a threatened invasion of the barbarians from punishing the insults which had been offered by the Arian party to the legates of Innocent, the Bishop of Rome separated himself from the communion of Theophylus and the Eastern bishops. Baronius (Ann. 407, § 19—22) declares that the Bishop of Rome proceeded to excommunicate, in form, the Emperor Arcadius, and the Empress Eudoxia. There is, however, no contemporary evidence to justify this assertion. The question is discussed by Bower. The custom of corresponding with each other among the Catholic Bishops, occasioned many more besides Chrysostom and his opponents to

<sup>4</sup> S. Joh. Chrysost. opp. ii. 689, edit. Bened. Labb. Concil. ii. 1292, seqq.

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write to Innocent. We consequently find many letters, in the form rather of decrees than of friendly epistles, collected by Dionysius Exiguus. They are, however, generally supposed to be spurious. If they are not, we may trace in the actions of Innocent many proofs that the power of the bishops of Rome was much augmented during his episcopate. Letters of this kind were addressed to Decentius, Bishop of Eugubium, in the Duchy of Urbino. In these letters Innocent affirms, that all the Churches in the West are bound to adopt, and observe strictly, every practice and custom of the Church of Rome; that all customs of other Churches differing from this, are corruptions of the ancient traditions, deviations from primitive practice, and insufferable abuses. This decree is founded on the assumption, that St. Peter alone preached in the West, and founded all the Western Churches, and that they ought, consequently, to conform to the customs of Rome, because that to Rome they owed their origin. He affirms that every point of discipline, or ecclesiastical polity, had been settled by the Apostles; and all that had been settled at Rome by St. Peter, had been uniformly retained; and he concludes by declaring that it is unlawful for any bishop to make the least alteration in the discipline of his Church; or to introduce into one Church a custom or practice introduced by another<sup>5</sup>. This decree may be called the one peculiar attempt at usurpation, which is the foundation of the subsequent efforts of Rome to introduce the uniformity which was destructive of the independence of all bishops and metropolitans; by making the Bishop of Rome the judge of the fitness or unfitness of the alterations, additions, or enactments which each Church or bishop ought ever to possess without any reference to the see of Rome. In another letter, or edict, he ordains that Saturday, contrary to the uniform practice of the ancient Churches, should be observed as a fast day. He decreed the ceremony of anointing the sick

<sup>5</sup> Labb. Concil. ii. 1245.

with oil; and ordained, also, a custom which some writers in the present day wish to be revived, that the oblations at the Eucharist be commended to God by the prayer of the priest. He decreed also, that no oil be used in baptism which had not been consecrated by the bishop; and that leavened bread be sent on Sunday from the greater to the lesser churches, to prove that they were in communion with the bishop. Another letter to Victricius<sup>6</sup>, Bishop of Rouen, in Gaul, enforces the canons of the Council of Nice; that no bishop be ordained without the consent of the metropolitan: but he does not add, without the consent of the Bishop of Rome. He commands, that none be ordained who may be required by the emperor to attend on duties incompatible with their clerical office<sup>7</sup>. He wrote to Maximus and Severus, Bishops of the Brutii; to Agapetus, Macedonius, and Marianus, Bishops of Apuleia; to Florentius, of Tiburtum<sup>8</sup>, and others, on various matters of discipline.—The more haughty tone of assumption observable in the later bulls and letters of the Bishops of Rome, do not prevail in these letters of Innocent. Augustine, in the year 404<sup>1</sup>, in the name of the bishops assembled in Council at Carthage, requested Innocent to apply to Honorius for new laws against the Donatists, who were then convulsing Africa with their crimes. The emperor complied with the petition. Thus another miserable precedent was set of calling in the civil power to punish opinion. Instead of calling upon the emperor to repress the crimes of which the Donatists were guilty, he was required to punish them as a sect. Indefensible as their conduct was, the complaint should have referred to their actions only, and not to their absurd and heterodox opinions. The Synod of Africa, in the year 407<sup>2</sup>, wrote both to Innocent and to Theophilus, to preserve the general peace of the Church. Every bishop, and more especially every council, deemed such interference

<sup>6</sup> Labb. Concil. ii. 1249.<sup>7</sup> See Bingham, Orig. Eccl. iv. 4,

v. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Labb. Concil. ii. 1261, seqq.<sup>1</sup> Id. p. 1332.<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 1113. 1333.

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between brethren to be a portion of duty and a proof of love. Immediately on his accession to the see, Innocent continued the demands of his three predecessors over East Illyricum. He wrote to Anynus of Thessalonica to charge him to rule over the churches in that province as the vicar of the Bishop of Rome. *This has uniformly been one part of the policy of Rome—never to recede from a claim, however unjust, or however resisted.* When Rome has spoken, the word is irrevocable. In his answer, towards the end of his episcopate, to the bishops of the Council of Carthage, Innocent affirms, that all ecclesiastical matters throughout the world are, by divine right, to be referred to the Apostolic See before they are finally decided in the provinces. This bold and novel claim was instantly rejected, though in respectful language, by the African Bishops. They had condemned Pelagius and Celestinus without consulting Innocent. They wrote to him, according to the custom then prevalent among all bishops, to inform him of their decision, and to require his sanction of their conduct. Innocent asserts the supremacy of his see<sup>3</sup>. They reply by denying that supremacy; and declare their wish to be, that he should act with them by confirming their decision by his authority, as he ought to do. Innocent, in his reply, evades the question—whether they ought to have consulted him before they condemned Pelagius,—by affirming, that they had done well by observing the ordinances of the Fathers, in referring for a final conclusion to the Apostolic See; and he then excommunicates Pelagius as the African Bishops had done. In this conduct he set the example, too, of the subtle manner in which *Rome, when resisted, compromises disputes without withdrawing its pretensions, or offending, unless it can do so with impunity.* One of the principal novelties in the letters of this bishop is found in that to Alexander, Bishop of Antioch. He affirms, that the Synod of Nice honoured Antioch,

<sup>3</sup> See his Rescriptum ad Con ilium Carthaginense, Labb. Concil. ii. 1283.

not for the greatness of his see, but because St. Peter had his see first in that city<sup>4</sup>.—Another novelty introduced by Innocent was the foundation of much of the subsequent presumptions of the Bishops of Rome. He decided in his letter to the same bishop, that when a province is divided by the emperor, there shall still be one metropolitan; and that the Church be not altered at the discretion of the emperors<sup>5</sup>. This seems to have been the first edict of a Christian bishop which ventured to declare the decisions of an ecclesiastic to be independent of the will of a prince. The decree of Innocent was an usurpation upon the united authority, both of the general or provincial Synods, which were accustomed so frequently to meet; and on the authority also of the emperors, by whom alone they had been hitherto summoned. A most singular remark occurs, also, in one of the decrees, or letters, of this bishop: he declares, that the priests who have departed from the Catholic Faith, have lost the Holy Spirit, *which operates chiefly in ordinations*<sup>6</sup>. The theory seems to have now begun to prevail which makes ordination by a bishop the sole channel of a peculiar grace. In a letter to the bishops and deacons of Macedonia, he calls the Apostolical See the Head of the Churches. *This language was the beginning of the assumption which has ended in declaring Rome to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, and out of which there is no salvation.* The affirmations of these earlier Bishops of Rome, in the course of a few centuries, became each in its turn an antiquity from which precedents were drawn to justify every claim to power over the authority and independence of Churches, over the rights of princes, or over the consciences of individuals. Innocent also enforces, by numerous decrees, the celibacy of the clergy; and condemns, under the penalty of not being admitted to repentance, the woman who vows virginity, and afterwards

<sup>4</sup> Labb. Concil. p. 1268, § 1.<sup>5</sup> Id. p. 1269, § 2.<sup>6</sup> Id. p. 1269, § 3.

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marries. In this, and in many other enactments, the germ of the future power of the Bishops of Rome is discoverable. *It is the tendency of all power to enlarge itself as much as possible.* The usurpations of Rome were the slow, cautious, gradual, and, in many instances, useful progressions of active, sometimes pious, sometimes crafty, but always ambitious authority, unsuccessfully resisted by its contemporaries; till it wielded the sceptre over reason, civilization, and Scripture. *But to none of its earlier bishops is the see of Rome more deeply indebted for its eventual greatness and dominion, than to Innocent the First.* The very pagans who sought in the invasion of Alaric to propitiate their ancient deities, solicited his sanction to their proceedings. He was honoured by the emperor, esteemed by his contemporaries, beloved by the people who had unanimously chosen him to be their bishop; and he employed all his great influence to the establishment of the supremacy of Rome, which he appears to have considered essential to the honour of Christianity, and the general benefit of the churches.

- XLI. Zosimus . . . 418 The pretensions of the Roman see to the supremacy over all the churches were maintained to the utmost by Zosimus. This bishop is remarkable for anathematising, in a letter to the priests and deacons of Ravenna<sup>7</sup>, all who apply to the court of the emperor in opposition to his decrees. The ecclesiastical began still more openly to oppose the civil power. The authority of the emperor must have been weakened by the disasters of the empire and the success of Alaric, and the new power began to display its influence. *From this period may be said to have began the more open and public collision between the see of Rome and the Churches which it resolved to subdue to its control.* The Churches of Africa repeatedly condemned the doctrines of Pelagius and his companion Coelestius. Zosimus, on Coelestius appealing to the see of Rome, writes to the African bishops, com-

<sup>7</sup> Labb. Concil. p. 1557.

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manding his accusers to appear at Rome ; and saying, that if they did not do so, he would declare Coelestius innocent. He abuses and deposes Heros, Archbishop of Arles, and Lazarus, Bishop of Aix \*, the two accusers of Pelagius. The other bishops of the Catholic Church take no notice of his conduct, but continue their communion with them. Soon after this Pelagius submitted his confession to Zosimus, who approved of his doctrines, and censured, in the most severe and unsparing language, the conduct of the African bishops. The African bishops adhere to their decision. Zosimus commands Paulinus, an African deacon, to repair to Rome. The deacon refuses to do so. The African bishops again meet in council, and condemn the opinions of Pelagius. Their firmness changed the conduct, though it did not alter the pretensions and claims of Zosimus. He yielded to the decision of the African bishops ; but affirms the superiority, authority, and privileges of the Apostolic See according to the canons of the Church and prescription. He affirmed that he was possessed of power to decide all causes ; and though his judgment is irreversible, he had been pleased, as a matter of favour, to consult them ; that his last decision, however, was not final, but that he had permitted things to remain as they were. This was another instance of the manner in which *the Bishops of Rome, even when defeated, never retracted a claim.* The African bishops met in council, and passed an express law against the incipient practice, so contrary to the canons of the Council of Nice, of making appeals to Rome. This council is generally called the sixth of Carthage. Many bishops from Spain were present. It consisted of two hundred and twenty-three bishops. St. Augustine was there ; and there the law was enacted, that no man should be admitted into the communion of their Churches who should presume to appeal from his own bishop to the Bishop of Rome <sup>1</sup>. Soon after this, Zosi-

\* Labb. Concil. ii. 1561.

<sup>1</sup> See the laboured note of Binus the council in the same volume, p. on this decree of the Council, in Labb. 1589.

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mus himself complied with the general sentiment, and condemned the doctrines of Pelagius and Coelestius which he had so recently approved.—Another act of usurped supremacy marked the episcopate of Zosimus. He assumed the right of dispensing with the decision of the Council of Turin ; and declared the Bishop of Arles to be the metropolitan over Vienne, and the two provinces of Narbonne; granting also to the Bishop of Arles all power to decide controversies not especially reserved for the consideration of the see of Rome<sup>2</sup>. The bishops of Gaul refuse either to acknowledge the authority or submit to the decision of Zosimus. Proculus, the Bishop of Marseilles, the principal opponent of Zosimus, was summoned to Rome. The Bishop of Marseilles, owing no allegiance nor canonical submission to the Bishop of Rome, refused to attend. Zosimus excommunicated him. Proculus disregarded the fulmination, and continued to exercise his episcopal functions, and lived and died Bishop of Marseilles. *The power of the bishops is that which Rome has always aimed to destroy from that time till the discussions in the Council of Trent.—If peace is ever to be restored to the Church, and the great schism of Christians to be healed, independence must be restored to the bishops and churches of the Catholic Church. Zosimus was the first who used the expression—"So it has pleased the Apostolic Sec."* He exerted his authority against councils, bishops, and churches. He approved an heresy universally condemned, and then censured the objects of his approbation; but he retracted no claim, rescinded no decree, and is canonized by the Church of Rome as a holy martyr who suffered for the confession of the faith.

XLII. Boniface I. . 422

This Bishop of Rome is remarkable as being the first who was called upon to defend one of the numerous usurpations which had, by this time, been made by the see of Rome. Soon after his election had been confirmed against Eulalius, competitor by a rescript of Honorius, (and this was the

<sup>2</sup> Labb. Concil. ii. p. 1566.

first instance in which the civil power had interfered in such matters,) the Emperor Theodosius, in consequence of some disputes in the province of Illyricum, which we have seen the Bishop of Rome claimed to govern by a vicar, decreed that all disputes in Illyricum should be referred to the bishops of that diocese, after they had consulted the Bishop of Constantinople.—Boniface was a bishop of mild and gentle demeanour when compared with some of his more immediate predecessors; but on this occasion he wrote in the same lofty style which they had assumed. He exhorted the bishops to permit no interference with the authority of the see of Rome; and demanded, who shall dare to oppose an ordination approved by the Bishop of Rome, or to assemble a council with that object? He refers to the Nicene Canons as justifying the claims to supremacy on the part of Rome. The dispute appears to have ended by Theodosius, at the interposition of Honorius, rescinding his law. *This was the first instance of the secular power changing its enactments to meet the decisions of the ecclesiastical.* The precedents were beginning to accumulate on which the superiority of a Pope over bishops, councils, and emperors was subsequently founded. Boniface I., on an appeal to his tribunal from a French bishop, referred the matter, according to the canons of Nice, to the bishops of the province.

- XLIII. Celestine . . 432 The two principal circumstances which render the episcopate of Celestine memorable, were the renewal of the solemn decision of the African bishops against the appeals to Rome; in consequence of the sanction given by Celestine, to an excommunicated and criminal bishop, who subsequently confessed his guilt; when a synodal letter was unanimously signed to the Bishop of Rome, not to receive into communion those whom the Church of Africa had excluded. The second is, the assumption on the part of Celestine, contrary to the canons of the Councils of Nice, Arles, Alexandria, Sardica, Chalcedon, and Antioch, declaring the translation of bishops to be lawful. The dispensing with the canons of general coun-

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- cils by his own authority was an important step towards the desired supremacy.
- XLIV. Sixtus III. , 440 *The system of progressive aggrandisement was continued by this bishop in letters written to Maximus, Bishop of Constantinople, approving the decisions of the Council of Ephesus; and in persuading the bishops of Illyricum, though contrary to the decrees of the same council, to continue under the dominion of his reputed or appointed Vicar, the Bishop of Thessalonica. At this time, A.D. 434, Vincentius wrote his Commonitorium.*
- XLV. Leo I. or, }  
the Great. } 461 *This bishop was the first of his brethren who successfully asserted the claims of his see to authority and supremacy on that enlarged and bold scale which made the world wonder, and at length submit to the ecclesiastical encroachments of papal Rome. He was declared by Valentinian III. to be the Head of the Universal Church, until whose recognition it was idle to dream of peace<sup>3</sup>. Valentinian, it is true, was a weak prince, but he was an emperor; and his conduct contributed to the enlargement of the ecclesiastical, or as it was soon to become, the papal power. Leo, before his election, was distinguished among his contemporaries for zeal, eloquence, and ability. He was unanimously chosen, on the death of Sixtus, to the vacant see, though he was absent at the time from Rome, on a mission of peace to reconcile Aetius and Albinus. He continued the system of authority by founding his primacy on the *Tu es Petrus*, in his sermon on the Assumption, by commanding celibacy to sub-deacons; and restoring to the communion of the Church, by his own affirmed power, Chelidonius, who had been deposed from his bishopric by a synod at Arles, according to the canons. Hilarius, the president of the council which had condemned him, proceeded to Rome to expostulate with his brother, the Bishop of Rome. Leo disgraced his episcopate by commanding him to be arrested. When he made his*

<sup>3</sup> See an Essay "On the Progress of the Papal Power," in the British and Foreign Review, No. xv. p. 7.

escape back to Arles, the Bishop of Rome excommunicated him, with the most insulting language, and restored Chelidonius to his see. Hilary (*so early may the contest respecting the Gallican liberties be said to have commenced*) refused to submit to the sentence of Leo; and when, some time after, he requested to be reconciled, he declined the very reconciliation he desired, when it was proffered on condition that he acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. The power of the emperor was still confessed to be paramount over the Church. It had never been directly denied, though the spiritual power had already begun to clash with, and to refuse (as in the case of the Bishop of Thessalonica governing Illyricum) submission to the temporal power. Leo, therefore, applied to the Emperor Valentinian, who published a decree, in which the Bishops of Rome were invested with plenary authority, absolute and uncontrolled, over the Gallican churches and bishops. It was addressed to Aetius, the Roman general in Gaul<sup>4</sup>. In this decree, all bishops are commanded to regard the ordinances and decrees of the Bishop of Rome as laws; and the magistrates are commanded to compel those who shall be summoned to Rome, to obey the injunction. The predecessors of Leo had claimed this power by the canons of the Church. Leo now claimed it by the command of the emperor. Gelasius, as we shall subsequently see, claimed it by divine right only. Thus every argument which could be urged upon the consciences of the members of the churches, whose aggregate composed the Catholic Church, were dexterously applied to enforce submission to the supremacy of Rome.—Leo expelled the Manichees from Rome after they had taken refuge there, from Africa. If the charges against them were indeed true, they were deservedly banished. One solid foundation of the authority of the assumptions of Rome at this time, was its reputation for orthodoxy, and zeal for the

<sup>4</sup> See it printed in Labbe, Concil. iii. 1401.

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purity of the faith. Leo was invited by the emperor, who had summoned the Council of Ephesus, to be present at the synod. He excused himself from leaving Italy; but sent two or three representatives, whom he called his legates—*a latere*. It is doubtful whether the deputies from the Bishops of Rome were so named before this time. Leo was one of the most distinguished theologians of the age. He wrote a letter to Flavianus on the subject of the disputes at Ephesus, and at former councils, respecting the person and nature of Christ; which was received with universal eulogy. It was read at the council, but it did not prevent the most disgraceful tumults, nor check the fierce and intolerant exclamation—*let Eusebius be burnt alive*. The firmness of the legates from Rome at this council deserved and received the admiration of their contemporaries; and contributed to the influence of the claims of their master. In consequence of his dissatisfaction with the proceedings at Ephesus, Leo wrote to the emperor to do what he had himself at this time, with all his claims to supremacy, no power to attempt. He requested the emperor Theodosius to summon a general council. Marcian, his successor, complies with the request, and the council is called at Nice, which was afterwards removed to Chalcedon. In speaking of this council, *Leo affirms, that a general council should be summoned by the command of Christian princes, with the consent of the Apostolic see*. The two are united in one authority, as if they were equal. Gelasius improved very soon after upon this assumption; and affirmed that every council was to be summoned by the authority of the Apostolic see alone. *One step of usurpation was uniformly made the foundation of another*. When the council was called, Leo sent his legates to represent him. They took their place in the numerous and brilliant assemblage next to the representatives of the emperor. They affirmed that all others who might have otherwise been entitled to that honour, had forfeited their claim by their late conduct. They did not demand it as

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their right. They ventured, however, on a new and unprecedented measure. They demanded, in the name of the Bishop of Rome, the head of all Churches, that a certain bishop should withdraw from the council. The imperial commissioners, instead of commanding the pope's legates to withdraw, complied with their claim to dictate in this strange manner before the council had decided<sup>5</sup>. Dioscorus had come there as a bishop. His opinions might be erroneous; but the council had been summoned for the express purpose of considering whether they were so. The Romish legates prejudged, insulted, condemned, and deposed him. *Their usurpation was successful, and the power of the see of Rome extended.* The conclusions of the Council of Chalcedon were called a Decree. The Fathers of the Council, in obedience to a decision of the Council of Ephesus, which forbade the composing of any new creed, called the results of their deliberations by this title. Certain disputes had long remained unsettled between the increasing influences of the Church of Rome and Constantinople prior to the Council of Chalcedon. The twenty-eighth canon of that Council made the Bishop of Constantinople equal in all things but precedence to the Bishop of Rome<sup>6</sup>. On the proposal of this canon, the Romish legates left the assembly. They were unattended by any other bishops. The canon was confirmed by the imperial commissioners. The emperor approved it. The whole Church, together with the civil authority of the empire, may be said to have sanctioned the decree. The Bishop of Rome alone opposed it. He declared, not that he was the head of the Universal Church, nor that Rome, by divine right, was the mother and mistress of all Churches; but, that the canon was opposed to the sixth canon of the Council of Nice. He refuses obedience; and threatens to separate Anatolius, the Bishop of Constantinople, from his communion if he per-

<sup>5</sup> Tillem. Mem. xv. 647.

<sup>6</sup> See it in the original Greek, in Labb. Concil. iv. 770. It has no place

in the versions of Dionysius Exiguus, or Isidore Mercator, both of whose editions are given by Labbe.

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sists in allowing the decree. Though all the bishops of the council were offended at this presumption, the emperor yielded. He requested Anatolius to accede to the demands of Leo. *Truth was sacrificed to the love of peace; and usurpation was rewarded for its perseverance by another successful step in the road to unlimited supremacy.* The warfare between the two first Churches of the Catholic Church began and proceeded till they became the most bitter enemies, and renounced for ever all mutual communion. Many decrees of Leo I. are received by the Latin Church. He ordered the more uniform observance of the festivals in honour of Christ; and that baptism should take place at Easter or Whitsuntide. *The chief decree which supported the claim to supremacy was that, which commands the Churches to send three of their bishops, or brethren, every year to Rome,* because synods ought to be held frequently. He enforces that favourite ordinance—the celibacy of the clergy; and passes many very useful laws respecting discipline. He has been honoured as a good, learned, zealous, but ambitious man. His bulls are the first which are inserted in the *Bullarium Magnum*<sup>7</sup>. The second of these bulls is that in which he presumes to confirm, by his own authority, the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, in those things only which relate to the cause of the faith. He approves, also, the Acts of the Council of Nice. He affirms that the Fathers of the Council of Nice were divinely inspired; and that the Apostolic see was always governed by the canons of the Fathers. The reader will observe the uniformity of this language with the Creed of the Council of Trent, respecting councils and canons<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Five vol. fol. Lugd. 1687.

<sup>8</sup> *Jura ecclesiarum*, (he says,) sicut ab illis trecentis decem et octo Patribus divinitus inspirata sunt, admonet, ordinata permaneat.

“*Quorum regulis* (i. e. *Patrum Canonibus*) *Apostolica Sedes*, quam reverenter, utatur, *scriptorum meorum*, quibus *Constantinopolitani antistitis conatus reputi poterit*, *sanctitas vestra lectione cognoscere*, me, auxiliante

*Domino nostro, et Catholicæ fidei, et paternarum traditionum esse custodem.*”

*Dat. xii. Kal. Aprilis, Opitione viro clariss. Cons. [A.D. 452.] ap. Bullar. Mag. i. 13, ed. fol. Lugd. 1655. See further, Labb. Concil. iv. 1342, where his letter to Marcian expresses the same theory, although couched in less decided language.*

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XLVI.	Hilary . . .	468	<p><i>One great cause of the power of the Bishops of Rome at this time was the ambition of various bishops, who aimed at superiority over their brethren, and appealed in favour of their claims to Rome. The Bishop of Arles<sup>1</sup> desired to be regarded as superior to the Bishop of Vienne. Hilary, on his accession, had progressed in the system of his predecessors by using still stronger language respecting the power of the Roman see. He observed in a letter to the Bishop of Arles, that all must know, wherever the traditions have been preserved uncorrupted, the due deference to be paid to the Spirit of God ; to St. Peter, and his see. When Leontius, the same Bishop of Arles, appealed to Hilary to affirm his superiority over the Bishops of Narbonne and Vienne, he congratulates him on his respect to the holy chair of St. Peter ; and expresses his wish to see the discipline of the Roman Church established in all churches, that there might be but one discipline, as there was but one faith. This specious argument became another stable, solid foundation of the subsequent supremacy. He decided, in general terms, in favour of the Bishop of Arles, and begs him to take care that the canons of the Church be generally observed. He adopted the same course with respect to certain bishops of Spain who applied to him ; and still further declared his supposed primacy by censuring Leontius for not apprizing him of the election of a Bishop of Narbonne, whom he proceeded to depose, though an irreproachable bishop ; because, with the consent of the clergy and people, he had been nominated by his immediate predecessor. He exercised, over the Gallican Church more especially, an authority to which the bishops unwisely submitted. The bishops of Spain acknowledged him to be the successor of St. Peter, whose primacy ought to be loved and feared by all ; and though they did not grant him the power of dispensing with</i></p>

<sup>1</sup> The correspondence of Hilary with these Gallican bishops may be seen in Sirmond. Concil. Galliae, i. 127, seqq. fol. Par. 1629 ; and also Tillem. Mem. xv. 55, 58. seqq.

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the canons, they confirmed the incipient submission of the churches by deeming his favourable opinion necessary to their decisions, respecting the ordination and translation of the bishops; which they were fully competent, as the officers of an independent episcopal Church, to have done without any interference on the part of the Bishop of Rome<sup>2</sup>. *Hilary acknowledged, however, that his power to rule over the churches was decreed by the emperors.* He did not claim his authority as a matter of divine right. He generally professed to adhere to the canons of the Church<sup>3</sup>; but in the case of Silvanus, the Spanish bishop, whom he commanded his brethren to restore after his deposition, he violated every canon of the Universal Church. Pleading necessity, the universal plea, *he established his own authority at the expense of all regard for the canons*; and set another precedent of usurpation, which was followed without scruple by his successors, wherever the canons of the Catholic Church, to which they swore allegiance, interfered with the progress of the ambition of Rome. The uniform opposition which the Church of Rome has made to the toleration of any conclusions in religion but those which itself has sanctioned, was shown by Hilary in his resisting a decree of the Emperor Authemius — that all Christians should worship God in the manner which they believe to be acceptable to the Almighty. He resisted this decree, unfortunately for the happiness of mankind, with success; and it is said, that he presented himself to the emperor in the Church of St. Peter, and obliged him to promise upon oath, that he would suffer no schismatical assemblies to be held in Rome. Ambrose had prevented Theodosius from coming into a Church until he had done penance for his rash decree respecting the insults offered to him by the people of Antioch; and Hilary might have believed himself justified in following the precedent. Ambrose

<sup>2</sup> See Labb. Concil. iv. 1062.

<sup>3</sup> Concil. Roman. A.D. 465, can. i. ap. Labb. Concil. iv. 1060.

punished a crime ; Hilary resisted a virtue. The Bishops of Rome were enabled, in consequence of the convulsions and revolutions in the state from the incursions of the barbarians and the weakness of the emperors, to dictate to their rulers ; and thus another precedent was established for the opposition to the command of the princes, which so frequently characterized the Bishops of Rome ; when the civil power was still further weakened in the darker ages of Europe. No evil consequences, however, resulted to the world at this time. The power of Rome was beneficial rather than injurious ; for it preserved the ancient landmarks of Christian doctrine ; and it had not as yet exerted its new usurpations to the imposition of absurd opinions, contradictory creeds, impossible changes from bread to the body of Christ ; the closing of the Scriptures to the people ; the forbidding of the cup to the laity, and other enactments which disgraced its more matured dominion.—Some inconveniences resulted, but the evil did not hitherto predominate over, nor extinguish the good.

XLVII. Simplicius . . 483

Whoever is acquainted with the tumults and distractions of those times <sup>4</sup>, the dissolution of the empire of Attila, the collisions of chieftains and their tribes, and the general dissolution of society in Italy, will be convinced that the protection of Christianity by a powerful, though ambitious succession of bishops, was essential to the eventual objects which were decreed by the Almighty ; in giving that completion of his One Revelation to the world. *The supremacy of Rome has not been an unmingled evil.* The surface of society was agitated, it is true, by political storms ; but whatever there was of the calm current of domestic life, was blessed, at this time, as at all others, by the influences of religion, under the government of the churches by their episcopal rulers. The great metropolitan at Rome, who subjected them to his dominion, compelled, in the midst of

<sup>4</sup> They are well related in Greenwood's valuable and laborious work upon the History of the Germans.

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the agitations of the mingled barbarians, and the populace of the countries they invaded, continued attention to Christianity and the Scriptures, by the very controversies which were elicited as the result of the continued papal usurpations. *Simplicius increased the power of the Bishops of Rome by the novel measure of appointing Vicars in the West*, as at Seville in Spain. He invaded the rights of metropolitans by exempting the Bishop of Modena from the jurisdiction of his metropolitan at Ravenna, and making him subject to Rome. Acacius, the Bishop of Constantinople, had procured an edict from the emperor, sanctioning the twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon. The imperial decree allows Acacius to take place of all other bishops, because Constantinople was the royal city. Simplicius resisted this edict; and there can be little doubt that he would have excommunicated Acacius with as much boldness as his successor, if he had not died in the midst of the disputes and convulsions attendant on the controversies of the day<sup>5</sup>. The Emperor Zeno, in his anxiety to unite his subjects in one faith, had published a plan of union, entitled the *Henoticon*<sup>6</sup>. This letter confirmed the decisions of the Councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Ephesus; but omitted all mention of the nature, or natures of Christ, according to the definitions of that subject by the Council of Chalcedon. *The influence of the see of Rome was much increased by the firmness of Simplicius*, who refused to compromise the truth, which he believed to have been decided by the Council of Chalcedon. The schism between the East and West, whether openly avowed, or partially healed, was continually being evidenced by the fanciful novelties of the metaphysical Greeks; and by the rejection of them by the more cautious and calmly reasoning Occidentals.

<sup>5</sup> See Baron. Annal. 483, § 21, seqq.

<sup>6</sup> The whole history of this important transaction is examined with much learning by Balth. Bibelius in a treatise

printed by him, 4to, Argent. 1673. He believes that it was drawn up by the advice, if not by the pens of Acacius and Peter Moggas, § 6.

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XLVIII.	Felix III.	. 492	This bishop with a council, augmented the schism between the Eastern divisions of the holy Catholic Church, by summoning to Rome, and by excommunicating Acacius, the Bishop of Constantinople <sup>7</sup> . This prelate, though orthodox, deserved some censure; but his brethren were competent to inflict it. He excommunicated the Bishop of Rome in his turn. Very great must have been the ecclesiastico-temporal power of the Bishop of Rome at this time. He commanded the successors of Acacius at Constantinople to omit his name from the diptychs of his own Church. Anastasius, on his accession to the empire, published a decree of toleration. Felix wrote to him to congratulate him, but seems to have condemned his decree. He proceeds much further. He commanded the African bishops, priests, and deacons, who had been rebaptized in the Vandalic persecution, to do public penance as long as they lived. <i>He enlarged the dominion of Rome over those countries where its authority had been uniformly and successfully opposed</i> : and he seems to have been obeyed—so great was the present authority of the Bishop of Rome—without resistance, and without a murmur.
XLIX.	Gelasius I.	. 496	This pope made still more decided efforts to maintain and extend the supremacy at which his predecessors had so long aimed. <i>He placed his demand of universal obedience on the basis of divine right</i> . The primacy of Rome had hitherto been rested on the sixth canon of the Council of Nice; the dignity of the city; the edicts of Valentinian, and the civil law; and the gradual submission of the bishops and metropolitans to the continued encroachments of Rome. Gelasius (as a man enriched seeks for honour to be the ornament of his wealth, and searches, therefore, for a pedigree as one source of the respect to which he aspires) was not contented with the greatness to which the Bishops of Rome had attained from the usual sources of authority. He deduces his pedigree from St. Peter, to which

<sup>7</sup> Labb. Concil. iv. 1073.

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even Leo had but faintly alluded, as the foundation of his claim to homage, and as the real cause of the primacy and supremacy of the Apostolic see. He affirmed, that the Church of Rome owed its primacy to the words of Christ to St. Peter—*Thou art Peter*; and these words have been subsequently quoted, on all occasions, as the title deed, the letters patent, the grant, the transmission of the authority of Christ to St. Peter; and of St. Peter to the Bishops of Rome, of the gift of universal supremacy over churches, bishops, princes, countries, and the whole race of mankind. The controversy is too well known to be discussed here; but the words have been constantly quoted with effect in confirming and establishing the claims of the Bishop of Rome.—The resistance his demand of supremacy experienced in England, at the synod of Strenæshalch or Whitby<sup>s</sup>, was overborne by this argument only—that God had given to Christ, and Christ had given to St. Peter, and St. Peter had given to the Bishops of Rome, the headship over the Church, by the words—*Tu es Petrus. The power of the Bishop of Rome at this season, increased with the increasing weakness of the civil power.* Gelasius overcame both the attachment of the people of Rome to their ancient festival of the Lupercalia, and the superstition which no less earnestly desired its continuance; and appointed in its place the Feast of the Purification. He had quoted Scripture wrongly to defend his claim to ascendancy. He did not, however, venture to exercise his authority, so as to do away the express commands of Christ; nor to stultify the intellect of the Christian worshipper by requiring him to believe that a substance which has existed but for a short time on earth is changed into another substance already perfect and complete; and which has long existed in that complete and perfect form in an invisible world. *Gelasius condemned the Manicheans as heretics, for not communicating in both kinds; and he declared*

<sup>s</sup> See Bede's Hist. Eccl. iii. 25.

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- L. Anastasius . . 498
- Acacius, the Bishop of Constantinople, had died out of the communion of the Church of Rome. His name, however, was read in the diptychs of the churches of Constantinople and the East, notwithstanding this circumstance. The Bishops of Rome now began, and they persevered till they had accomplished their object, to insist on the removal of the name of Acacius from the catalogue of the men whom the Church honoured. *The extent of power is often most decidedly proved by success in conquering pertinacious opposition on a point of honour.* Anastasius wrote to the emperor of the same name, urging the argument from the words *Tu es Petrus*, to cancel the name of Acacius. The language of his request was affectedly humble, moderate, and gentle. The determination to uphold the primacy of Rome, and the refusal to admit the Church of Constantinople into communion with that of Rome, until the name of Acacius was removed, was no less resolute than firm. Anastasius died before the negotiations were completed. He is not venerated so much as other

<sup>9</sup> See the references and discussion in Bower, *Vit. Gelasius*, vol. ii. p. 228.

One bull of Geladius is found in the *Bullarium Magnum*, vol. i. p. 15. It includes the germ of all the future claims of the Bishops of Rome to govern the churches, and to preside over and sanction councils by divine right, as the successors of St. Peter. It affirms that it belongs to the Apostolic see to approve councils—*unamquamque synodum suâ auctoritate confirmat, et continuâ moderatione custodit, pro suo scilicet principatu, quem beatus Petrus Apostolus Domini voce perceptum, Ecclesia nihilominus subsequente, et tenuit, semper et retinet.* § 6.

It affirms, also, that the Apostolic see is judged by no one, neither does

any appeal lie to any power from its jurisdiction, while to it belongs the right to judge all, § 11.

In sections 12, 13, it mentions that the Apostolic see condemns whomsoever it thinks fit, according to the custom of their Fathers, even when no council has assembled; and possesses the power of absolving even those whom the council has condemned, as in the case of Athanasius, Chrysostom, Flavian, and others.

The opinions of Geladius respecting the doctrine of the Eucharist are examined at considerable length by Albertinus, *de Eucharistia*, lib. ii. cap. 1, fol. Davent. 1654. The sacramentary of this pope was printed along with those of Leo and Gregory, by Muratori, fol. Venet. 1748.

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bishops of the Church of Rome, because he is supposed to have wavered, or to have been less imperious than was requisite in insisting on the removal of the name of Acacius from the diptychs.

# SIXTH CENTURY.

LI. Symmachus . 514 Schisms in a Church do not destroy its power, provided that its discipline be preserved. The schism between Symmachus and Laurentius, who was elected in opposition to him, was attended with disgraceful and dangerous tumults. Laurentius was an exemplary and holy man. Symmachus was a strenuous upholder of the claims to spiritual dominion. His friends, when a council had been summoned by Theodoric, to consider the conduct of Symmachus, declared that a council had no power to judge a pope—that he was responsible to God alone. A council was held at Rome soon after, in which this assertion of Eunodius, Bishop of Pavia, the defender of Symmachus, was highly praised, and commanded to be adopted, as one of the decrees of the Apostolic see. It became one of the papal axioms—the fertile source of infinite dissension for many centuries before the Reformation, and a topic of discussion to this very day, between the tramontane and ultramontane parties in the Church of Rome. Many Oriental bishops were refused communion by Symmachus on their taking refuge in Rome from their heterodox persecutors in the East ; because though their orthodoxy was the cause of their suffering, they had refused to expel the name of Acacius from their diptychs. *Obedience to the see of Rome was now made the criterion of fitness for Christian communion*—so firmly was the power of Rome already established.

LII. Hormisdas . 523 Three measures of this bishop contributed to the more complete establishment of the dominion of the see of Rome. His perseverance in demanding the expunging of the name of Acacius from the diptychs of Constantinople. His affirming the propriety of punishment for opinion—and his appointing two legates in the West, in Spain, as they

had been already appointed in Illyricum. The first of these was effected in consequence of the danger to which the empire of the East was threatened by the insurrection of the troops under Vitalian in favour of the orthodox, or Roman party. The pope corresponded with Anastasius, as a prince with a prince ; and compelled his successor Justin, to demand the submission of the Bishop of Constantinople to the claims of Hormisdas ; and thus for a time, the schism between the East and the West appeared to be healed. The second was the beginning of that detestable code which ever disgraces the Church, bishop, sect, or individual who adopts and defends it—that the body of one may be punished to prevent supposed evil to the soul of another. The third was an arbitrary act of usurpation. Some bishops of Spain appealed to Hormisdas on certain points of discipline. The Bishop of Rome appointed two legates to proceed to Spain to settle all such questions, summon councils, and to order the observance of the canons. To these vicars all the bishops of Spain could apply for advice, interference, and assistance ; and the provinces of the Peninsula became subject to the spiritual ascendancy of the Bishop of Rome.

- LIII. John I. . . 526 This bishop proceeded on an embassy to Constantinople at the request of Theodoric, to persuade the Emperor Justin to cease from persecuting the Arians, who were favoured by Theodoric. He was received in that city with the utmost respect ; but he refused to perform divine service with the Bishop of Constantinople, unless he was placed on the highest seat as the Roman pontiff. This homage was paid him. He afterwards succeeded in his mission ; but on his return to Rome, for reasons not thoroughly understood, he was sent by Theodoric from the audience in the palace to the common prison at Ravenna, in which he died, 18th May, 526. His martyrdom augmented the strength of the persecuted cause. The power of Rome was increased by the union of firmness and orthodoxy in the person of its bishop.

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LIV. Felix III.	530	<p>The power of the Church of Rome was increased in the episcopate of Felix the Third by an edict of Athalaric, the son of Theodoric, commanding that all creditors who had demands on ecclesiastics, should apply to the bishop, who was to hear and determine the cause. The civil tribunals were never to be first appealed to ; but the creditor might have recourse to them, if the bishop gave him no redress. This law was confined to the Roman clergy, in honour of the Apostolic see. The disputes of the clergy among themselves, in conformity with the advice of St. Paul, were brought before their respective churches, and decided without referring to the civil tribunals. If a layman and a clergyman differed, the layman might bring the cause before a secular judge. This law was now repealed, and the cause of the Church was strengthened. No layman could sue an ecclesiastic in a secular court ; neither was an ecclesiastic permitted to answer in such court, unless with the sanction of his bishop. This privilege was extended by Justinian from the Roman clergy to all ecclesiastics ; but with the condition that, if within ten days the layman did not acquiesce in the sentence of the bishop, the cause should be reheard before the civil magistrate. These privileges were subsequently extended to the exemption of the clergy from all trials before the civil judge, even in criminal cases. <i>The usurpation was found to be intolerable, at least in England ; and the constitutions of Clarendon repealed it.</i> The foundation, however, of the exemption was laid before the time of Justinian, who ascended the throne of the Eastern empire in the year 527, during the episcopate of this bishop.</p>	
LV. Boniface II.	532	<p>The reader of English history has been no doubt offended by the narrative of the excommunication of the dead ; and the exhumation of the bones both of Wickliffe, and of certain foreign reformers in the reign of Mary. This strange and indefensible atrocity finds its first precedent in the conduct of Boniface II., who excommunicated, after death, his rival Dioscorus, an anti-pope, elected on the same day as himself. The</p>	

episcopate of this Bishop of Rome is only remarkable for his encouragement of the now established custom of appeals to Rome; and an attempt to obtain from the Bishops of Rome the power of appointing their successor. The attempt failed. It was opposed, as contrary to the canons<sup>1</sup>, by the clergy; and Boniface himself publicly burnt the decree.

- LVI. John II. . . 535 We have now seen the Bishops of Rome, from a much more obscure, humble, and doubtful origin than the Oriental churches, gradually attain to an equality of influence with their temporal princes—to be rulers of bishops; directors of churches; superseders of metropolitans; the judges of appeals in all ecclesiastical causes; and the asserters of primacy over the Universal Church of Christ. Every thing was for them, and made their power to increase—the greatness of the city; the name of Rome; the identification of all the ancient honour and renown of antiquity; with the splendour of power to which the zealous Christians began to elevate their bishop; the solid foundation laid by the first bishops in virtue, purity of faith, patient endurance of persecution, and resistance to the vices of heathenism; the canons of the most venerable of the councils; the edicts of Valentinian III., declaring unity with the Church of Rome to be indispensable to the happiness of the Church; of Gratian, commanding all to adhere to the faith of Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, as well as that of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria; the decisions of the first four councils against the conclusions of the more speculative Greeks; and the uniform, and generally speaking unwavering attachment of Rome to those decisions;—the hospitality of Rome to the sufferers who adhered to the same decisions; the perpetual divisions of the Oriental churches, which aided the incipient ambition of Rome as certainly as the contests between the separatists from its communion aid its more matured ambition in the present day; the

<sup>1</sup> Quia contra canones fuerat hoc Rom. ap. Hist. Byzant. xxvi. 20, fol. factum, says Anastasius, De Vit. Pontif. Venet. 1729.

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unceasing interference by the Bishops of Rome in the contentions of churches ; the favour, eulogy, and rewards generally bestowed on the appellants from their own churches to the see of Rome ; the refusal in any cases of danger and difficulty (as in the matter of the comparatively minor instance of the continuance of the name of Acacius in the diptychs of the Church of Constantinople) to withdraw from, or to rescind any claim to ascendancy when once advanced ; and above all these, the continued pressure upon the consciences of the zealous, the timid, the scrupulous, and the wavering among the faithful, who were resolved to please God, and to save the soul by embracing every proposition which the priesthood commended to ignorance ; by the bold assumption of divine right, in applying to the see of Rome, in virtue of its succession from St. Peter, the words of Christ to that Apostle ; and so interpreting them, that resistance to Rome was identified in the mind of the believer, and in the teaching of his bishop, with resistance to Christ Himself. *All these things, together with the progressive weakness of the empire, the distress of the people, the continuous irruptions of the barbarians, and the permanent institution of the episcopate of which the Bishop of Rome was the principal ; the influence, irresistible when blended, of the union of the appeal to Scripture, the canon law, the civil law, the claim to divine right, and the very slow gradation by which all these causes of power were rendered influential ;—the adoption of many of the ceremonies of heathenism ;—the unchanging affirmation that communion with the Church of Rome was the only criterion of acceptableness with God, in the partaking of the benefits of the sacraments ; and of being certainly a member of the one true Church of Christ ; these, with other causes, all tended to enlarge the ever-increasing homage and attachment of the early votaries of Christianity towards the eternal city. The attachment of the people endowed the see with wealth—wealth produced ambition—ambition, energetic and persevering en-*

encroachment upon the mass of the true Catholic Church; and encroachment terminated in the primacy of order, in ascendancy, supremacy, and dominion. Yet learning, zeal, love of truth, virtue, and patience under suffering, are legitimate sources of respect; and the world had no cause to complain of the earlier consequences of the homage which was paid to Rome, till it attained that irresponsible power, which one of our most distinguished statesmen<sup>2</sup> well defined to be "tyranny that had united itself to error and to vice, and become the curse and the reproach of mankind." At the beginning it was not so. In the age of Justinian, though the encroachments of the Church of Rome had hitherto met, as they have uniformly done, with perpetual resistance; the world had no cause to complain, as had the ages which were about to witness the wielding of the sacerdotal sceptre over the empires and kingdoms of Europe. Five hundred years before, the Church of Rome had scarcely extended beyond the limits of the imperial city. In the time of Justinian, the power, influence, or authority which it asserted was extended in the West; *over France*, by its tacitly permitted interference with its bishops; *over Spain*, by its two legates; *over Italy and Sicily*, as its own provinces; *in the East*, over the churches of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, and therefore, over their dependencies by their acknowledgment of its primacy, though not of its asserted right to dominion; *over Africa*, by its censuring without resistance the African bishops who remained from the once flourishing churches of those extensive provinces—that is, in short, over nearly the whole of the civilized world. The Arians who divided the empire, and who had been protected by Theodoric, had been condemned by the great councils, anathematized by the Roman power, and were now discountenanced by Justinian. They were the enemies of the one great truth upon which all spiritual Christianity reposes—the divinity of Christ; and their

<sup>2</sup> Charles James Fox.

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resistance, therefore, to the supremacy of Rome, assisted rather than retarded the progress of the Bishops of Rome to their long desired dominion over the Catholic Church. *Temporal power had not yet been granted to the see ; but there was no greater influence over the mind of man at this period, than that which was exercised by Rome over the churches which constitute the one Catholic Church, and over the conduct and consciences of the believers in the truth of Christianity.* Some hundred years after the reign of Justinian, the power of the Bishops of Rome had so much increased, not only in ecclesiastical, but in temporal matters, that they were enabled by their own *fiat* to dethrone kings ; to depose princes ; and to be obeyed by the people when they released them from their sworn allegiance to their temporal sovereigns. *As the progress of the power of the popes was slow and gradual, much difference of opinion has prevailed respecting the time at which it may be said, that the Bishops of Rome were capable of exerting this temporal authority.* It has been dated from the council of Nice ; from the edicts of Valentinian or Gratian ; from the edict of Phocas, seventy years after this time, to Gregory the Great ; from the donation of Pepin ; from the era of Charlemagne ; and from the rescripts of Hildebrand.—It has been, also, assigned to the decree of Justinian in the reign of Pope John II., which we are now considering.—*This date appears to me to be preferable to any other, for the reasons I shall proceed to mention ; and I shall, therefore, fix this time as that in which the sceptre was transferred from the civil to the ecclesiastical power ; which I shall as briefly as possible survey in its parallel streams of canonical, decretal, conciliar, and papal authority, till the fourfold yoke became too intolerable to be borne any longer by the Catholic Church.—We shall find that the Church of Rome was not contented with the creeds which had now been established as the faith of the Catholic Church, by the general councils in whose deliberations it had taken a part ; but it*

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proceeds to wage continual war against the right of every church to its own creed, and every individual to the exercise of his own reason, till God was insulted by the suppression of his pure Revelation ; and man was rendered indignant by the fury of the Inquisition, and the insisting on the belief in transubstantiation.—One continued war was waged against those who offered resistance to Rome ; and against the power of forming opinions ; under the plea of continued resistance to heresy. The canons of the churches which were influenced by the Bishops of Rome ; the decrees of the Bishops of Rome themselves ; the decisions of councils which were eventually summoned by the Bishops of Rome only ; with the ever-restless efforts of the see of Rome to extend its power, were all directed to one object only—the suppression of the right of every individual to judge by evidence, and to arrive at just conclusions as a matter of duty to God.—The temporal power of the Bishops of Rome was the corner-stone of this stupendous fabric. *The basis of this temporal power was laid by the edicts or letters of the Emperor Justinian.* The spiritual power of the pope at this time, could scarcely have been increased. The avarice and injustice of the emperor was exhausting and impoverishing the empire, and alienating and disgusting many of the best of his subjects. A few years before he ascended the throne, he had seen the first religious war among Christians ; when his predecessor, Anastasius, who had declared that it was unworthy of an emperor to persecute the worshippers of Christ, had been insulted by the populace and the monks, and compelled, undiademmed, and as a suppliant, to appear on the throne of the Circus. He had seen the triumph of the motley army of Vilatian, in favour of the faith of the Bishop of Rome. Thrace had been depopulated ; Constantinople besieged ; and sixty five thousand Christians exterminated, till the Bishop of Rome was satisfied ; and it was evident, that if he wished to retain the supreme power over his people, and to suc-

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ceed in any great effort of ambition, his throne might be endangered and his projects defeated, unless he first propitiated the spiritual ruler who could call forth the armed population of the West, though he professed to wield no sceptre but the cross. At this peculiar juncture, five objects had compelled the attention of Justinian: the seditions of Constantinople<sup>3</sup>; the reconquest of Africa; the war with Persia; the state of Italy; and the extirpation, by persecution, of heresy.—The seditions of the capital were subdued by the firmness of Theodora; but they must have convinced him of the necessity of conciliating all his subjects. The war with Persia had been ended by Belisarius, after a dearly purchased victory by the Persians, who had consented to a treaty of peace, but who were yet most formidable neighbours to the emperor. An army was about to proceed to Africa to subdue the Vandals; and there was some prospect of re-obtaining possession of Italy, which had now been separated from the dominion of imperial Rome for thirty-six years.—The friendship of the Bishop of Rome was highly important to him on all these accounts; but especially in aid of his ambitious design of recovering the ancient provinces of Italy. The convulsions in Gaul, the ruin of Burgundy, the dismemberment of the French provinces, the total disunion of the government of Athalaric, the successor of Theodoric, combined to enlarge the influence of the Bishop of Rome; and render it necessary that Justinian should endeavour to secure his friendship and co-operation, so as to promote these plans of ambition.—Neither were these the only reasons for his resolving to secure his favour. In his zeal against heresy, Justinian had weakened his empire by his severe laws against the Jews, Samaritans, Montanists, and others. He had commenced, in order to unite all men in one faith, the most cruel persecution hitherto

<sup>3</sup> See Gibbon, vol. viii. cap. xl. p. 83. Milman's edition.

attempted by Christian against Christian <sup>4</sup>. The province through which the Mahometan power first successfully penetrated, to overthrow the empire of the East—the north of Syria—was depopulated. All was misery, and hatred of the emperor; and the friendship of the Bishop of Rome was most useful. Justinian, therefore, on the accession of John II., sent to him Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus, and Demetrius, Bishop of Philippi, *with a letter in which he acknowledges Rome to be the head of all Churches*; renders honour to the Apostolic see, and to the Bishop of Rome; and declares that he submits and unites all the bishops of the whole East to his holiness; and desires that nothing be done in the churches without the sanction of the Bishop of Rome.—Then follows the confession of faith of the emperor, and the profession of adherence to the four first councils. He concludes the decree with directing, that all priests should believe, confess, and teach the doctrine of the Apostolic see <sup>5</sup>. He then requests the approbation of the Bishop of Rome to the opinion which he had adopted on the controversy of the day.—With this letter he sent certain presents to the Bishop of Rome, among which, it is said, was a golden sceptre <sup>6</sup>. If so, the emperor may be said to have conferred on him by this edict, and by the presentation of this symbol of authority, the emblem of the temporal power. This, however, is of doubtful authority. In a letter to Epiphanius, the Bishop of Constantinople, the emperor reiterates the same or similar expressions respecting the Bishop of Rome.

The following are among the most remarkable of the imperial documents previously alluded to, of which I think it necessary to give translations; and first, the celebrated letter of the emperor to John II.

<sup>4</sup> See Baron. Annal. 533, § 7.

<sup>5</sup> Itaque omnes sacerdotes universi orientalis tractus et subijcere et unire sedi vestre sanctitatis properavimus.

Epist. Justiniani Imperatoris ad Johannem papam, ap. Labbe, iv. 1743.

<sup>6</sup> Baron. A.D. 533, § 18.

JUSTINIAN'S LETTER TO JOHN II.

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"The religious, mighty, renowned, and triumphant emperor, the ever august Justinian, to the most holy John, Archbishop of the venerable city of Rome, and Patriarch.

"Rendering honour to the Apostolic see and to your holiness (as ever was and is our earnest desire), reverencing your holiness as it is meet we should reverence a father, we have hastened to bring to the knowledge of your holiness, all things which pertain to the state of the Church ; inasmuch as it has ever been an object of our anxious care to preserve the unity of your Apostolic see, and the stability of the holy churches of God, which up to the present time remains firm and unshaken, no opposition being able to prevail against it. To this intent we have hastened *to subject and unite to your holiness all the priesthood of the Eastern empire.* We have thought it necessary, therefore, that your holiness should be notified respecting the matters now in dispute, though they are plain and evident, and have always been firmly upholden and maintained by all the clergy, in accordance with the doctrine of your holy Apostolic see. For we do not suffer that any thing which concerns the state of the churches, though the matter in dispute be clear and indisputable, should be passed over without being notified to your holiness, who art the head of all the holy churches. For we are desirous (as we have said before) by all means to augment the honour and authority of your see <sup>7</sup>." . . . .

The emperor, by the following extract from a letter of the same date, apprises the Patriarch of Constantinople of the substance of his epistle to the Bishop of Rome.

JUSTINIAN'S LETTER TO EPIPHANIUS.

"The emperor to the most holy and blessed Epiphanius, Archbishop of this royal city, and Œcumenical Patriarch.

"Being anxious that your holiness should be made acquainted with all things that pertain unto the state of the Church, we have thought it necessary for this purpose to make use of these 'divine' abstracts (*divinis compendiis*), and by them to notify unto your holiness the matters which are now beginning to be disputed, though at the same time we are persuaded that your holiness is already acquainted with them. When, therefore, on a former occasion, we had found that certain aliens from the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church had followed the deception of the impious Nestorius and Eutyches, we promulgated our holy edict (as your holiness also knows), whereby we checked the madness of the heretics ; so that in nowise have we changed, do we change, or have we neglected that ecclesiastical order, which by the assistance of God has been preserved up to the present time, as also your holiness knows ; but in all things preserving the unity of the most holy churches with the most holy pope of ancient Rome, to whom we have written letters similar to these. For we do not suffer that any thing pertaining to ecclesiastical order (*statum*) should be passed over without being referred to his holiness, since he is the head of all the most holy priests of God ; and chiefly for this cause, that as often as heretics have sprung up in these parts, they have been restrained both by the sentence and right judgment of that venerable see <sup>8</sup>." . . . .

<sup>7</sup> Labb. *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Baron. A.D. 533, § 20.

Upon which two epistles Venema has made the following remarks <sup>9</sup>.

“John II., surnamed *Mercurius* on account of his eloquence, approved, as his predecessor had done, the thesis of the Scythian monks, and condemned the Acemitæ, their bitterest enemies. But he is chiefly celebrated in consequence of the singular manner in which he is considered to have been honoured by Justinian. With this view the letter of the emperor to him is brought forward, which is preserved by Baronius, under the year 533, in which Justinian professes that he hastened both to subject and unite to the Roman see all the clergy of the whole East, and that it was the head of all the holy churches; wherefore he had anxiously referred the whole matter to his cognizance, and requested from it (the Roman Church) a definitive sentence concerning the Acemitæ. Which things,” says Venema, “if they be true, breathe too great adulation, and are apt to foster the ambition of the popes. But that epistle is without date, or consul’s name, and does not appear to be genuine. Besides, it should be remarked, that by the word *subjici* he means nothing more than that he will follow willingly the definition of the Roman see, owing to his own opinion of its orthodoxy, but not on account of its authority and power. This also Justinian writes to the patriarch of the city of Constantinople—that he hastened to follow the Apostolic see in all things.”

<sup>9</sup> Johannes II. appellatus ob eloquentiam *Mercurius*, monachorum Scytharum thesin, modo memoratam, secus ac decessor fecerat, approbavit; et Acemitas, acerrimos eorum hostes, damnavit. Sed celebratur maxime, quod singulari modo censeatur a Justiniano honoratus. Circumfertur utique epistola imperatoris ad eum, quæ a Baronio recensetur, ad ann. 533, qua Justinianus profitetur, se properasse omnes sacerdotes universi Orientalis tractus et subjicere et unire sedi Romanæ, eamque esse caput omnium sanctarum ecclesiarum; quare se festinasse omnia ad notitiam ejus

referre, et ab ea definitivam sententiam questionis de negotio Acemitarum petere. Quæ, si vera sint, nimiam spirant adulationem, et ambitioni Paparum fovendæ sunt apta. Sed epistola illa est sine die et consule, nec videtur genuina. Interea notetur, *subjici* ecclesiæ Romanæ, nihil aliud sibi velle, ac sequi definitionem sedis Romanæ sponte, ex opinione de ejus orthodoxia, non vero ex autoritate, et dominio ejus. Sic de Patriarcha C. Pol. quoque adserit Justinianus, se festinare in omnibus sequi sedem Apostolicam.—Venema, vol. iv. pp. 697, 698.

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Gravina, in his *Origines Juris Civilis* has the following :—

“ We may, however, know by evidence from Justinian himself, that the Bishop of Constantinople, although ruling over the Oriental bishops, was at the same time himself, with the rest of the churches, obedient to the Bishop of Rome.”

Gothofred, in his *Corpus Juris*, remarks concerning the passage in the letter of Justinian to Epiphanius in the following terms :—

“ Hence you may collect that they err who are of opinion, that Phocas was the first of the emperors before the time of Gregory the Great, who held an opinion against John (as being universal patriarch), since here it is evident, that in the time of Justinian, the primacy was conferred upon the pontiff.”

The following epistle from the *Volumen Authenticum* of Justinian, corroborates and confirms the letter of the emperor to John II.

“ TO JOHN, ARCHBISHOP AND PATRIARCH OF OLD ROME.

“ As Rome before was appointed the source of laws, so also, no one can doubt but that there was the chief honour (*summi pontificatus apicem*) of the pontificate; whence we think it requisite to declare by a special law of our mightiness (*speciali nostri numinis lege illustrare*), that Rome is the foundation of the laws, and the fountain of the priesthood; so that, from this place the operation (*vigor*) of this most salutary law may extend over all churches situate even upon the ocean; and thus may become, of the whole West, as well as of the East, wherever there are possessions appertaining to the churches now, or may hereafter be acquired by them, a law consecrated to the honour of God, adapted for that part of the empire.”

A prescription of one hundred years is granted; and it adds, “ Your holiness may esteem this law as one which will benefit the Catholic Churches of the whole West, and to be extended over the Eastern parts,

wherever the sacred churches have any possessions ; that the defending of holy things may be a gift becoming the Omnipotent God. The same law which our eternity (*nostra Æternitas*) has piously given for the honour of Almighty God, to the revered seat of the chief apostle Peter, let all lands, all islands of the whole West, which are situate even in the corners of the ocean (*quæ usque ad ipsos oceani recessus*), esteem for ever as *the foresight of our command* (*nostri imperii providentiam*). Bearing in mind that, of our own free-will, we grant the prerogative of this law to the Roman Church, not only in the Western parts, but also in the Eastern parts, wherever there are, or hereafter may be, ecclesiastical possessions of the city of Rome."

The Magdeburg Centuriators relate the following additional piece of information:—

"To him (John II.) Justinianus Cæsar sent a sceptre of gold, enriched with six pounds weight of gems. It was also to him that the edict of the emperor Justinian was sent, containing a confession of faith, and a refutation of the heresies adverse to the Catholic Faith."

In his published laws Justinian still further augments the authority and power of the see of Rome. Besides the respect paid to John in styling him the *head of all holy churches*, as well as *chief of all the most holy priests of God*, in the year 535, he calls Rome the *source of law*, and the *fountain of priesthood*; and in 541 he decrees, that precedence should be given to the Bishop of Rome, but that Constantinople should, in preference to all other sees, take the second place<sup>1</sup>.

I do not affirm that any of these strong expressions, either in the letter of the emperor to the Bishop of Rome himself, to Epiphanius, or in the laws which followed them, actually confer absolute power. I consider them as so sanctioning all the preceding claims, demands, rights, privileges,

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and usurpations of the Bishops of Rome, that neither the inconsistency of Justinian in speaking of the Bishop of Constantinople in the same manner as he spoke of the Bishop of Rome ; nor the arbitrary conduct of the emperor towards the immediate successors of John II., had any more effect in destroying the influence of the popes, than the conduct of Napoleon when he endeavoured to coerce the pope of his day.

With respect to the presentation of the sceptre, it must be confessed that Anastasius, the monk, who relates, in the lives of the popes, the various gold and silver presents which had been made to the churches, in the spirit of the auctioneer, who had as much to say on a ribbon as a Raphael, and details their weight like a goldsmith<sup>2</sup>, omits the circumstances mentioned by the Magdeburg Centuriators, who refer to Bale and to Stella as their authorities for the gift of the sceptre.

Nothing now remained for the Bishops of Rome but to abide their time, and to exercise the temporal power as they exercised the spiritual, on the earliest opportunity. The sceptre, the crown, the robes of majesty, the purple, and the judgment-seat, remained some time longer with the civil rulers ; but the power, the influence, the homage, the command which are implied by these, and of which these externals are but emblematical, began to pass rapidly from the emperors to the Bishops of Rome. Their authority, it is true, was always resisted. Sometimes it appeared to advance, sometimes to recede ; but like the flowing tide, it always progressed till it reached the boundary at which the providence of God ordained that it should go no further.—*The remainder of the history of the power of the Bishops of Rome, is the history of the ecclesiastical power in general. The rest of its history is but the recapitulation of appeals from bishops against bishops and*

<sup>2</sup> See the extract from Anastasius in Baron. A.D. 533, § 18. Osiander, A.D. 533, although he quotes for his authorities Platina, Bale, Stella, and

the Magdeburg Centuriators, passes over the notice of the golden sceptre, evidently intimating that it rested upon no sufficient testimony.

princes, of churches against churches and rulers, of the maintainers of opinions condemned as heresies, either on account of falsehood or novelty, whether true or false ; and the continued promulgation of edicts to govern or direct the efforts of the human mind. *Much good preceded the evil, in which the power of the Bishops of Rome eventually resulted.* The Scriptures were preserved—the great doctrines of Christianity were submitted, in the midst of the incessant accumulation of errors, to the consciences of the people ; virtue was encouraged, though the vices and ambition of the Bishops of Rome themselves disgraced the cause of religion itself ; and though the holiness of the believer was too often blended with superstitious observances, and ascetic monachism, the God of revelation was gradually made the universal object of worship instead of the gods of the heathen. *The divinity of Christ, the grand foundation of the spiritual temple, was uniformly, zealously, and sacredly maintained ;* though the value of his atonement, as the simple, only hope of the sinner, was mingled with the will-worship, needless exercises, absurd mystifications, and with the invocations of saints, angels, and the Virgin.—The curse under which we live—that thorns and thistles, cares and sorrows, errors and usurpations, must characterize every stage and condition of society, whether in the form of states or churches, was not taken away from the Church of Rome ; neither can we hope, till we arrive at a world where we shall be able to review all the dispensations of the Almighty, to ascertain for what purposes much of the evil of that Church was permitted.—*One thousand years elapsed from the edicts of Justinian to the time when the general use of the word* PROTESTANT *told the resolution of the more reflecting part of man, to submit no longer to the power which those edicts so materially contributed to establish—one dark day of the Lord, with whom a thousand years are as one day, during which the Sun of righteousness seemed to have set ; and the cold and blackness of the midnight*

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succeeded to the evening which commenced at the hour of the edicts of Justinian.—*The last rays of that sun of glory seem to have been forgotten, when the councils of Lateran quenched the light of Scripture, kindled the fires of the Inquisition; and made opinion, heresy, doubting, a crime, and resistance to Rome, whether rightly or wrongly offered, an unpardonable infamy.*—Very painful is the history before us, but very useful will its lessons eventually prove, if the churches of the one Catholic Church, will learn to value the union of discipline, freedom, and truth. *Very useful will the experience of the past be found to be, if the Church of Rome will learn to yield to the general voice of its equals in the Catholic Church of Christ; and consent to give back to the people the Scriptures, the cup, and the intelligible prayer;—to the priesthood the blessings of the helpmeet for them;—to the world at large, the privilege to become Christians from evidence and persuasion, and not from force and authority.*—This it must do, or after perhaps a short and bitter triumph, it will be deserted, as it ought to be, by the awakened nations who now own its dominion. The indignation of the wise and virtuous will break its yoke from their necks; the souls of men will recover their privileges; and religion will again become what it ought to be—the homage of the soul to God, founded upon reason, welcoming revelation upon conviction; and valuing the priesthood not as lords over mind, conscience, and enquiry; but as the best assistants, comforters, and directors, companions and friends, in the way to spiritual peace now, and eternal happiness hereafter.

LVII. Agapetus . . 536

Three bishops presided over the see after the edict which gave the primacy to Rome, and during the second council of Constantinople. The first of these, Agapetus, affirmed to the utmost all the prerogatives of his predecessors. Though he excommunicated certain monks at the petition of Justinian; he reprobated the emperor for making the request that he would do so. He boldly set the example which was uniformly followed by

his successors, until it became the foundation of one of the most ruling axioms of the Papal code. He superseded the canons of the Universal Church by his sole authority, and decided that episcopal ordinations were not valid if they were conferred by heretics. The Church of Rome of our day refused to acknowledge the orders of a gentleman of noble family, a clergyman of the Church of England, who embraced the creed of the Council of Trent; while the Church of England, in conformity with ancient canons, acknowledges the validity of the orders of the Church of Rome over any person who forsakes that creed, and becomes united to its episcopal communion, while it deprecates the heresies of Trent, the worship of the Virgin, and the rest of its errors.—Miltiades (A.D. 313) and a council at Rome allowed this privilege to the Donatists. The Council of Nice allowed the validity of their episcopal ordination, on their becoming true Catholics, to the Novatians. The Council of Africa (348), in its forty-eighth canon, allowed the same to the Donatists and others. He thus opposed, finding a precedent in the private council of Eliberis (305), two general councils, and a bishop of his own see. Being summoned to Constantinople by Justinian, Agapetus refused, with great firmness, though earnestly pressed by the solicitations of Justinian himself, to communicate with one who was believed to be opposed to the divinity of Christ, as the great truth was maintained by the universal Church: and he affirmed on all occasions, the superiority and spiritual supremacy by the see of Rome over all the Churches of the Catholic Church of Christ. I have used the expression, he was *summoned* to Rome by Justinian. The words may seem to imply, that the edict of Justinian had not conferred temporal power on the Bishops of Rome while they still remained dependent on the imperial will.—It is true, I answer, that the Bishops of Rome did not act as temporal princes, in the exact sense of that word, till they had become possessed of territorial domains. But the exercise of spiritual power to the extent which was now claimed, and

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which was sanctioned by this edict, was identified with temporal power in its effects upon the honour, property, influence, and happiness of the individuals against whom it was exercised.—They had not yet proceeded to lay claim to the exercise of the power of life and death by their own authority. The secular power was the executor of the spiritual decisions, as it nominally continued to be in the worst times of the Inquisition in after-ages, when the wretched criminal was committed, with tender words and cruel treachery, to the secular arm : but the highest power that man could exercise upon his fellow-man resulted from the union of the usurpations of the Church of Rome, and from the sanction of those usurpations by the imperial laws. It is always most difficult, in tracing the progress of a gradually and perpetually increasing influence, which sometimes appears, like the advancing tide, to retrograde; to assign the actual date of the commencement of its more accurately defined authority. The House of Commons, for instance, possessed, not the authority, but the power to change the dynasty of our rulers; to bring a king to the scaffold; and so to overrule the decisions of the Bishops of the Church in England, that novel opinions, both in discipline and faith, were enforced by public law on a religious and truth-loving people. If we attempt to trace the power of the House of Commons to do these things, one writer refers us to the days of the weakness of royalty; another to the barons' wars under Henry III.; one to the Wittenagemot of the Saxons; another to the woods of Germany. One affirms the power to be inherent in all societies, and declares the will of the people in representative assemblies to be the earthly omnipotence by which kings reign, and princes decree justice. Another shrinks from the blasphemy, and teaches the existence of immutable principles by which sovereigns, senates, and people, are to be alike governed. Whatever be the theoretical conclusions, the reader of English history finds much difficulty in assigning the precise period when the popular senate, by whatever name it be called, first increased

the power to control and check the sovereign. So it is with the temporal power of the Church of Rome. The exercise of that power was too notorious to be denied. It defended itself, by referring, on all occasions, to antiquity. It is difficult to decide on the precise time when it began. *The edict of Justinian, sanctioning papal claims by the most solemn act of imperial power, by the most influential legislator among the emperors, after Constantine, seems to be an epoch to which this may be most properly assigned.* Agapetus, among other arbitrary ordinations, forbade the alienating of church lands on any plea or pretence whatever.

- LVIII. Sylverius . . . 537 This bishop was the last before the second general Council of Constantinople. He firmly refused to acknowledge the heretical bishops of the East. He was deposed on pretence of treason by the acts of the empress Theodora, and died in exile.
- LIX. Vigilius . . . 555 The second Council of Constantinople was held in the time of Vigilius. This bishop degraded the cause of the divinity of Christ, on the strenuous maintaining of which doctrine the see of Rome may be said to have rested its principal true claim to the homage of the Universal Church. He condemned the Council of Chalcedon by communicating with Anthemius of Constantinople, contrary to the example of his two predecessors. He alternately opposed and supported the three Chapters; and was banished from Constantinople during the meeting of the council in 553, on account of his troublesome opposition to the proceedings of that assembly, at which he refused to be personally present, or to appoint his representatives to attend the sessions; and he died on his return home to Italy from Constantinople. He was justly condemned for his vacillation by the more firm adherents to the decisions of the four first General Councils; and materially injured the influence and reputation of his see. One law of Vigilius, supporting the ancient command of God in the Levitical code, that a man should not marry his brother's wife, is wisely retained in the canon law of England. This privilege, which was granted by papal dis-

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pensation to Henry VIII., was not only contrary to the law of God, but to the Theodosian code, the laws of Constantine, the decision of Basil, and the universal custom of the Church. I mention it as another instance of the manner in which one Bishop of Rome may rescind the decrees of his predecessors. *Upon the right exercise of this power may be said to rest one foundation of the hope of union among Christians.*

The second Council of Constantinople was held in the episcopate of Vigilius. The desire of Justinian to remedy such disorders in the Church as had been long injurious to its character and utility, induced him to promote conferences between the orthodox and the Monophysites. He was a staunch supporter of the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon; but Theodora, his empress, was attached to the Monophysite party, whose opinions had been condemned by that council. The conferences totally failed in effecting a settlement of these differences. The empress, by secret influence, encouraged the Monophysite doctrine, which Justinian was using means to suppress. Anthimus, who advocated the heresy, was by her influence promoted to the patriarchate of Constantinople; and Vigilius had promised, upon his elevation to the dignity of the Roman see, to espouse the same cause, but failed to fulfil his promise. Although Justinian had given to Alexandria an orthodox patriarch, Egypt still fostered the sectarian party and principles of the Monophysites, and the interference of the emperor and empress in these theological disputes served rather to make the opposite parties, whom they respectively supported, more inflexible in their opposition and ill-will to each other. This discordance was rendered still more detrimental to the Church by the monks of Palestine, who revived some of the customs and opinions of Origen, which in former ages had been condemned by the Church; and Theodorus, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, who had gained favour with the emperor, had lent his influence to the Origenists of Palestine. Mennas, who was patriarch of Constantinople in the year 544, prevailed on Justinian to condemn the principles which the Origenists

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industriously endeavoured to establish. Theodora opposed the advice of Mennas, and persuaded the emperor that the peace of the Church would be more effectually restored, and the Monophysites reconciled, by the public condemnation of Theodorus of Mopsuesta, a Nestorian, whose writings had long been an offence to the orthodox; together with the writings of Theodoret against Cyril; and the letter of Ibas to Maris; and to this advice Justinian acceded. Thus the three articles written severally by Theodorus, Theodoret, and Ibas, were condemned by an imperial edict, under the title of the *Three Chapters*. Though the Eastern bishops did not disapprove of this measure of the emperor, the Western Churches resisted it on the ground of the Council of Chalcedon having approved both the letter of Ibas and the document of Theodoret. This dissent to the imperial edict in the west, induced Justinian to summon Vigilius, Bishop of Rome, to Constantinople, and by an especial *judicatum* to confer on him authority to condemn the *Three Chapters*; but the firm objection of the Western Church caused Vigilius to decline the execution of the commission. It will here be seen that the writings denominated "the Three Chapters" were supported by the Nestorian party; and that the friends of the Monophysite sect had craftily obtained a condemnation of them by the emperor. The defenders of orthodoxy were strenuous in support of those decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, by which Ibas and Theodoret had been acquitted of the charge of heresy; and, at length, in order to bring these disputes to a termination, Justinian, in the year 553, convened a general council at Constantinople, the heads of which are here given in the usual condensed and tabular form.

Synopsis of the Fifth General Council.

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Council VI.	The Second Constantinople Synod.
Date.	A.D. 553. May 4th to June 2nd <sup>3</sup> .
Number of Bishops.	One hundred and sixty-five <sup>4</sup> .
By whom summoned.	Emperor Justinian <sup>5</sup> .
President.	Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople.
Why and against what opinions.	To decide whether the opinions contained in the Three Chapters were orthodox <sup>6</sup> . Also, concerning the errors of the Origenists.
Against whom.	Theodorus of Mopsuesta—Theodoret of Cyrrhus—Ibas of Edessa. Because they favoured in their writings the Nestorian cause, and opposed the opinions of St. Cyril.
Chief decrees or canons.	No canons. The decrees were, That Heretics after death may be anathematized. The Three Chapters were condemned as not orthodox, or agreeable to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon; consequently, in these the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches. The errors and writings of Origen condemned, and anathema against Origen <sup>7</sup> .
Penalties.	Anathema.
Sufferers.	Theodorus of Mopsuesta was anathematized, and all who should undertake to defend the Three Chapters. Arius—Eunomius—Macedonius—Apollinarius—Origen. Ibas had been before deposed in consequence of his Nestorian opinions <sup>8</sup> .
Emperor.	Justinian I.
Bishop of Rome.	Vigilius; but he was not present at the council, though in the city at the time.

<sup>3</sup> All historians agree as to the date of this council.

<sup>4</sup> With respect to the number of bishops, Du Pin, vol. v. p. 139, states that they amounted to 152; which Dens, vol. ii. p. 143, augments to 255, while all the other authorities give 165; and as no express reason is given

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The sittings of this council consisted of eight conferences, the greater part of which were occupied in the examination of the writings, mentioned under the name of *the Three Chapters*. During the first sitting, the bishops present determined to send a deputation from the synod to request the attendance of Vigilius, who was then in Constantinople; but he refused to attend. The second and third day's conferences were likewise spent in endeavouring to induce him to be present, but he still excused himself, without alleging any other than vain and frivolous reasons for continuing to be absent. The actual cause for his refusal to attend is considered by Gesner to have been in consequence of Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople, having been appointed by the emperor to preside over the consultations of the synod; thus laying claim to supremacy on the occasion, in conformity to the custom of the bishop of the city where any council was held claiming the prerogative of the presidency of such council. But the supremacy having been ceded to the Roman bishop in 533<sup>9</sup>, Vigilius wished to establish his right to precedence by virtue of such title, independently of any exception in favour of ancient customs. It is also alleged by Cave and others, that Vigilius had taken great offence at the Three Chapters having been condemned by a synod held in the same city, in 546, (or as Cave states 541,) without waiting his arrival from Italy. Be this as it

by those authors whose calculation differs from the general opinion, the majority are most likely correct.

<sup>6</sup> Baronius throws out objections against the validity of this council. Because Vigilius was not present in person or by his legates, he says, it could not be a general council. It is, however, plain from the conduct of Justinian on this occasion, that the favour conferred on John and the Bishops of Rome was not such unconditional supremacy as to do away with the prerogatives and individual privileges of the other patriarchs and bishops; for when Vigilius, by virtue of his supremacy, employed his influence to cast obstacles in the way of the proceedings of the council, the emperor proved by an edict of banishment being immediately put in execution against the contumacious patriarch, that he had not en-

tirely resigned his authority over the Church to the holy see; and consequently, that the pleas which the Roman pontiffs have since used in support of supremacy from the act of Justinian to John II., and every pretended claim of an earlier date, are overthrown by the punishment of Vigilius, by the authority exercised by Justinian himself.

<sup>6</sup> Constantinopoli quinta synodus habita est contra Theodorum et omnes hæreticos, qui affirmabant beatissimam Virginem solum hominem, non etiam Deum et hominem peperisse: qua quidem in synodo statutum est, ut beata Virgo Θεοτόκος diceretur, quod Deum suo partu nobis edidisset.—Platina in Vit. Vigilii papæ.

<sup>7</sup> See Spanheim, p. 368.

<sup>8</sup> Cent. Magd. Cent. vi. c. ix. p. 522.

<sup>9</sup> See the passages before cited.

may, his opposition to the measures of the council on this subject, but more particularly on the anathema passed against the writings of Origen, was so arrogantly displayed, that the emperor banished him from the city, and a schism immediately ensued between the Eastern and Western Churches, the latter having questioned the validity of the anathema. At length, in consequence, as it is alleged, of the victories of the imperial forces under Narses in Italy, Vigilius, in 554, subscribed to the decrees of the council; but died the year following on his return from exile. Pelagius, his successor, immediately declared in favour of the proceedings of the fifth general council; but many of the bishops and clergy of the western provinces continued to condemn in their writings the acts of the council; and many churches in Italy, France, and Ireland, persisted in their dissent from the anathema of the dead.

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The facts collected in this section, and particularly those more immediately connected with the second council of Constantinople, point out with much precision the relative influence of the ecclesiastical and civil powers at this period. Some fluctuations had been occasionally raising or sinking the one or the other of them for some length of time before, according as circumstances conspired to favour each in its turn; and as the reign of Justinian may be considered a memorable era in the history of the Church, every event of that period which could at all affect the destiny of the Christian world in its future stages, is worthy of observation.

Baronius, who omits no opportunity of vindicating the supremacy of the Roman Church, argues, that it could not be an Œcumenical synod, nor legitimately congregated by the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as the Roman pontiff was not present, either by himself, or by his legates<sup>1</sup>. Evagrius, though he admits that Justinian convened the synod, signifies, that the emperor solicited and obtained permission of Vigilius so to do, saying, "that he gave his consent by his letters, but refused to be present himself<sup>2</sup>." By no other author are any doubts suggested as to the em-

<sup>1</sup> Cum alioqui nec œcumenicæ tunc synodi potuerit habuisse nomen, utpote nec in Spiritu Sancto legitimè congregata, cui sive per se sive per suos ipse Romanus pontifex noluit interesse.—Baronii Annales, vol. vii. p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iv. c. xxviii. p. 417, edit. Reding.

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peror, on his own authority, having summoned the said council; and that Justinian perfectly understood the exercise of the imperial authority on the like occasions, is clear from his letter to a council held at Constantinople in the year 546, in which he states, that "the emperors had always called the councils, as that of Nice by Constantine; that of Constantinople by Theodosius I.; that of Ephesus by Theodosius the Younger; and that of Chalcedon by Marcian<sup>3</sup>."

*Proceedings of the Fifth General Council.*

The emperor's circular letter by which the council was summoned, was read by a bishop named Theodorus, in which he proposed to them for consideration—Whether heretics can be anathematized after death?—They were then to examine the writings of Theodorus of Mopsuestia; those of Theodoret of Cyrrhus; and the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris the Persian<sup>4</sup>.

There were no penalties, but the anathema was laid on the three persons above-named, as well as on those who had been condemned by the four first general councils.

The errors of Origen which came under the consideration of the council, were partly metaphysical, and partly speculative, concerning the souls of men having, as he and his followers maintained, a pre-existent state, in which they were without sin; but that they fell from holiness antecedently to their union with human bodies. Also, they asserted that Christ was the Son of God by adoption only; and that before his incarnation he had been united with celestial beings<sup>5</sup>.

In the fifth conference it was decreed that heretics might be anathematized after death.

In the last conference, the fathers not only condemned the Three Chapters, but also anathematized the person of Theodore of Mopsuesta, (after many objections had been made

<sup>3</sup> Du Pin, vol. v. p. 137.—Magdeb. Cent., cent. vi. c. ix. p. 502.

<sup>4</sup> The principal reason of the assembling of the synod, according to Baronius, was the altercation concerning the Three Chapters. Ceterum præcipua hujus cogendæ synodi causa fuit

haud dubium maxima illa de tribus capitulis altercatio.—Baronii Annales, vol. vii. p. 429.

<sup>5</sup> Gesner de Conc., pp. 466—468. Cave, vol. i. p. 560. Spanheim, p. 367. Cent. Magdeb., cent. vi. c. ix.

and considered,) as well as Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, and others.

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Justinian received from this council the title of "Most Christian Emperor."

Here then, with the fifth general council, we end the history of the Church and its Councils, under the influence of the civil power.

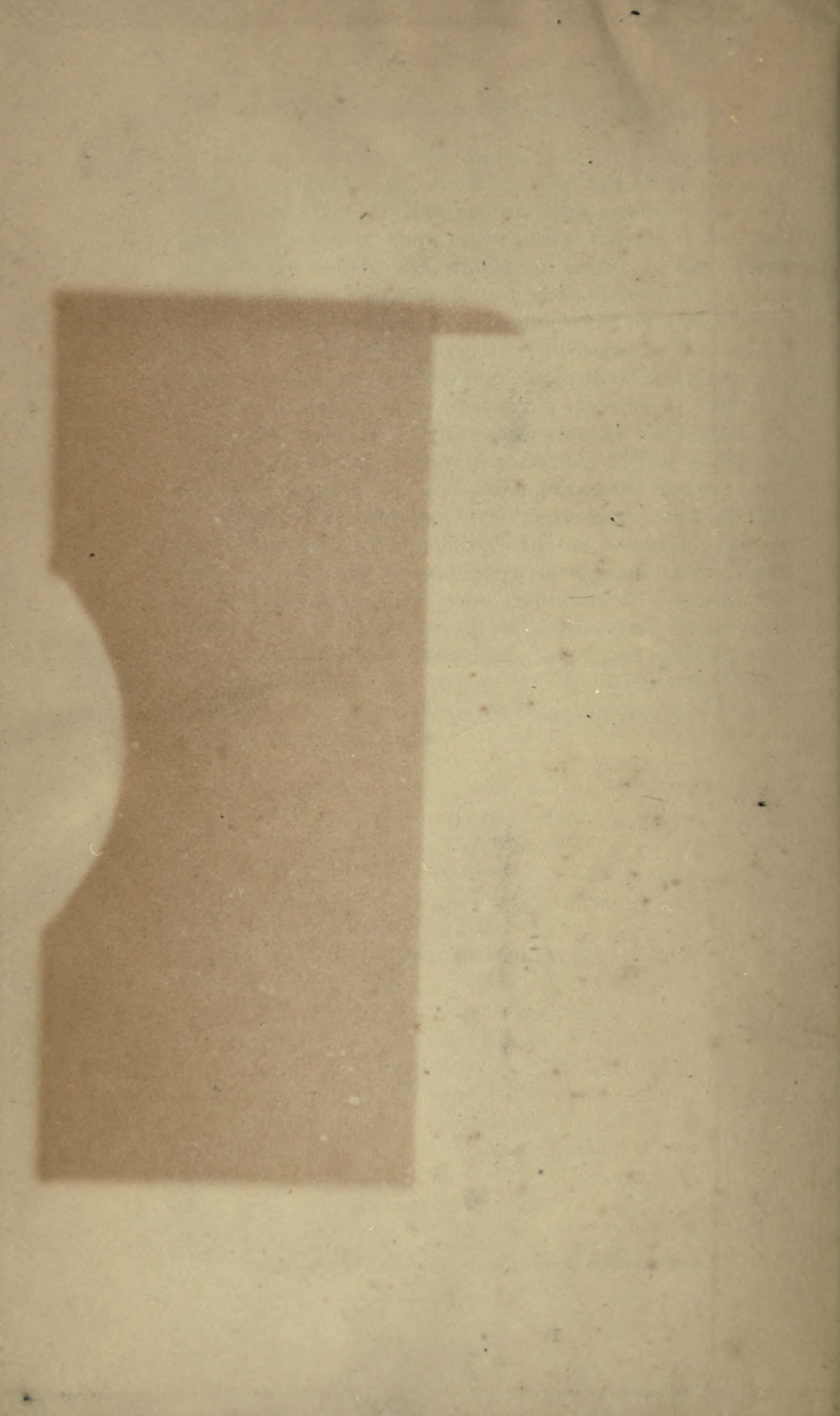
The gradations of the influence of the ecclesiastical power, the conflicts of the orthodox throughout every stage of the Christian Church, its impediments, its adversities, with all the important transitions by which its progress was distinguished, are best ascertained from the transactions, the character, and the spirit of these general councils. These were, in fact, the positive and unerring signs of the times. The consideration and decision of some prevailing question of controversy by which the tranquillity of Christian fellowship and union was disturbed, was generally the professed object for which each council was summoned; but there were always certain acts and discussions that characterized the spirit which operated on these occasions. The Council of Nice and the first Synod of Constantinople, convened by Theodosius the Great, were more expressly engaged in ascertaining and settling the subject of the Trinity according to the doctrine of revelation, as interpreted by the Apostolic teachers and their contemporary pastors; and as it had continued to be taught by the most exemplary of their immediate successors. The value of their labours, and the ability and holiness which distinguished the proceedings of those two great ecclesiastical assemblies, needs no proof beyond the approbation which they have received from the concurrent testimony of the churches of every subsequent age; all of which have embraced the rules and articles of faith deduced and embodied from their deliberations.—The councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon were engaged for the most part in discussing the nature of Christ during his ministry on earth; and the incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation could not fail to lead some minds to unsatisfactory and visionary opinions, and to unfriendly disputations far from favourable to the cause of truth, and to that humility of mind prescribed by the Redeemer as one of the duties required of his disciples.—The third and fourth general councils seem

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to have deviated in some degree from that simplicity and useful consultation by which the two former were characterized; and the disputations of the fifth general council will appear calculated to injure, rather than to improve that mutual benevolence and respect, which the welfare of the Church required should exist among its highest functionaries. Justinian had suffered himself to be influenced by a treacherous Monophysite bishop to promote controversy on the difficult points contained in the writings called the Three Chapters; and the revival of so unnecessary a question as that concerning the writings of Origen must seem no less injudicious, if not contemptible. During the whole of this period the ecclesiastical power was still gaining upon the imperial; and its gradual encroachments were never more constant than during the reign of Justinian. In the following book we shall consider the several steps of aggrandizement with which each subsequent pope continued to augment the power of his predecessors, till the ecclesiastical influence of the east and west, which had been thus growing and strengthening from age to age, together with the absolute authority of the imperial power, became united and concentrated in the See of Rome.

END OF VOL. I.





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